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The works of John Angell James

THE WORKS

OF

JOHN ANGELL JAMES

ONEWHILE MINISTER OF THE CHURCH ASSEMBLING IN
CARRS LANE BIRMINGHAM.

EDITED BY HIS SON.

VOL. II.

SERMONS.

LONDON: HAMILTON, ADAMS, & CO.
BIRMINGHAM: HUDSON & SON.

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THE DEATH OF EMINENT MINISTERS A PUBLIC LOSS.

A FUNERAL SERMON

FOR DR. BOGUE,

PREACHED IN CARRS LANE MEETING, BIRMINGHAM,
NOVEMBER 6, 1825.

Dr. Bogue was the Author's Tutor, and was looked up to by him as the greatest character that he had ever familiarly known, and as the man who of all whom he had ever worked with, had the highest aims and the loftiest views. No wonder, therefore, that the Author's opinions and mental tastes were more influenced by Dr. Bogue than by any other person. On reference to the Doctor's life, by Dr. Bennett (which if not a full detail of his life, contains a very good delineation of his character), the Editor discovered that his father shared with his old Tutor, and therefore, no doubt, derived from him, his great regard for President Edwards in sacred, and for Dr. Johnson in secular literature, and his strong dislike to works of imagination. He had a bust of the Doctor in his dining-room, as if he still loved to live under his eye. He was very fond of talking of him, and never did so without expressing his admiration of his character; and the Editor well recollects his stopping a conversation which had become a general attack on all born on the other side of the Tweed with the remark, "But Dr. Bogue was a Scotchman."

2 Kings ii, 12.

My father, my father! the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof.

There is an uncommon grandeur, an unearthly greatness, in the more distinguished characters whose history is preserved in the Word of God. Compared with the prophets of the Old Testament, and the apostles of the New, the most celebrated heroes of antiquity, and the most splendid personages of fable, are but as the fires which blaze on earth, to the stars which shine in the firmament of heaven. Among the worthies of the Jewish dispensation, Elijah, stern, awful, and majestic, is second only to Moses. His life was spent in presiding over the schools of the prophets, in delivering the messages of God to his sinful nation, and in struggling against its idolatrous court for the preservation of true religion; his discharge of these arduous duties, was supported by a series of stupendous miracles, and as his final honor, he was removed without dying to his heavenly rest and reward. His translation was one of the most remarkable events which took place during the continuance of the Levitical economy. "And it came to pass as they still went on, and talked, that behold there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of

fire, and parted them both asunder, and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven." "O! the singular glory of Elijah! What mortal creature ever had this honour, to be visibly fetched by the angels of God to his heaven? Every soul of the elect is attended and carried to blessedness by these invisible messengers; but what flesh and blood was ever graced with such a convoy? There are three bodily inhabitants of heaven, Enoch, Elijah, and our Saviour Christ; the first before the law, the second under the law, the third after the dispensation of the law had given way to the gospel; all three in a several form of translation. Our blessed Saviour raised himself to and above the heavens, by his own immediate power: he ascended as the Son, they as servants; he as God, they as creatures. Elijah ascended by the visible ministry of angels; Enoch, insensibly. Wherefore, O God! hast thou done this, but to give us a taste of what shall be; to let us see that heaven was never shut to the faithful; to give us assurance of the future glorification of this mortal and corruptible part. Even thus, O Saviour! when thou shalt descend from heaven, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trump of God, we that are alive and remain, shall be caught up, together with the raised bodies of thy saints into the clouds, to meet thee in the air, to dwell with thee in glory. Come death, come fire, come whirlwind; they are worthy to be welcome, that shall carry us to immortality."*

The design of God in this event was to put a mark of honour upon piety, embodied and represented in the character of Elijah; to awaken the attention of a slumbering age and a careless nation to the awful realities

* Bishop Hall's Contemplations.

of eternity, by a new proof of the resurrection of the body; and to encourage the seven thousand who had not yet bowed the knee to Baal, to maintain their protest against idolatry, notwithstanding the persecution to which it might expose them. On beholding the astonishing and brilliant spectacle, Elisha gave utterance to his agitated feelings in the language of the text; in which having first expressed his ardent affection and deep sense of bereavement, he pronounces the finest eulogium on the character of his master, by declaring that his life and labours were of more importance to Israel than all its array of horses and chariots. Never was friendship more beautifully blended with patriotism, nor the sorrows of private affection so elevated by the sense of national loss.

The first remark I make upon this passage is, that eminent ministers are the defence of the country, and the glory of the age in which they live. I shall not attempt to prove this by ascertaining how far literature, science, eloquence, the art of reasoning, and education, are indebted to their labours; and how far these things contribute to the well-being of a country; but I shall take higher ground, and show that such men are the strength and glory of a country, as the chief instruments of supporting the interests of religion. It is a most important sentiment, and ought to be kept constantly before the public mind, that religion is the most direct and powerful cause of national comfort, prosperity, and security, and that in its absence all their other causes must be very limited and transient in their effects. If religion were a mere abstraction of devotion, confined in its exercise to the closet and the sanctuary, and restricted in its influence to the imagination and the

taste, but not having any necessary control over the conscience, the heart, and the life, and not intended to regulate the intercourse of society; if it consisted merely in attendance on the rites and forms of the church, and began and ended upon the threshhold of the house of God, then it would be difficult to point out what connection such a religion had with the welfare of a country. It would in that case resemble the ivy, which though it add a picturesque effect to a venerable fabric, imparts neither stability to its walls, nor convenience to its apartments. But if religion be indeed a principle of the heart, an element of the character, the habit of thinking, feeling, and acting aright in all our social relations; the basis of every virtue, and the main prop of every excellence; if it be indeed the fear of the Lord, by which men depart from evil; if it be faith working by love; if it be such a belief in the gospel of Christ as leads to a conformity to his example; religion being such as this, must secure the welfare of any country. There is not one single influence, whether of law, of science, of art, of learning, tending to the well-being of society, which true religion does not guard and strengthen. Take the summary of its duties as expressed in the two great commandments, that a man shall love his God supremely, and his neighbour as himself: or take the direction of Paul: "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue, or if there be any praise, think of these things:" or take Peter's comprehensive description of the circle of christian duty, "Honour all men, love the brotherhood, fear God, honour the king."

Here we see that religion, though founded on a belief of doctrines, and cherished by the exercises of devotion, diffuses its influence over the entire character of man, and through the whole range of society. It is the belief, the love, the worship, the imitation of the Deity. It is sound morality, animated and sanctified by the spirit of true devotion. Such religion contains the germ of every social excellence, the seminal principle of virtue in every relation in life: "it maintains an incessant struggle with whatever is selfish, barbarous, and inhuman; by unveiling futurity it clothes morality with a divine sanction, and harmonises utility and virtue in every state of existence, and every combination of events." To man, as regards his personal character, it prescribes, not only homage to God, but self-government and self-respect; and it follows him into the domestic circle, the fellowship of the church, and every combination which he forms in the great community of his country, or in the citizenship of the world; binding upon him the duties which are appropriate to his station, whatever it may be, and calling on him to acknowledge the claims which reach him from every quarter. As with the flaming sword of the cherubim, it guards all the social interests of man, protecting the throne from the turbulence and anarchy of the people; and the rights of the people from the encroachments of the throne; the rich from the invasion and spoliation of the poor; the poor from the insults and oppression of the rich: it teaches justice to the master and fidelity to the servant; ordains equity and truth as the rules of commercial transactions; nerves the arm with industry, and melts the bosom to compassion; carries the authority of God into recesses too deep and distant to be reached by the institutes of

human jurisprudence, and makes a man a law to himself amidst the urgency of temptation, and the privacy of solitude. In short, there is not a single duty by which man can promote the welfare of society, which is not enjoined by religion; nor is there one evil influence which it does not oppose by the weight of its authority and the terror of its frown: it places society under the shadow of the eternal throne, draws over it the shield of Omnipotence, and employs for the defence of its earthly interests the thunder issuing from the clouds and thick darkness in which Jehovah dwells. That man must be a fool and not a philosopher, whatever be his pretensions to learning or to science, who does not recognise in religion the tutelary genius of his country, and the ministering angel of the world.

Let it not be said that virtue would do all this without religion, for where did national virtue ever exist in the absence of religion. A land of atheists, or even of deists, is a dark and frightful spectacle, which the world has never yet been fated to witness, and in all probability never will be: it is easy to conceive, however, that in the absence of all the moral principles, the standards of duty, and the examples of goodness contained in the Scripture, which we find so essential to the right formation of character, such a land must be barren of virtue and prolific in crime. The only attempt ever made to set up the reign of atheism in a country, was productive of such enormous vice, and such prodigious misery, that it excited the horror, and was abandoned amidst the execrations of the community. It is religion alone that can preserve virtue, in which the well being of a country consists; and it is self-evident that the

universal prevalence of piety, would be necessarily followed by the universal reign of virtue; for virtue is not only a part of piety, but piety itself. It has been finely demonstrated by Butler, in his immortal work, that the virtue of a people necessarily increases their strength, and that a nation's pre-eminence in virtue, other things being equal, must ever produce superiority in strength.

And then there is another way besides its direct influence, in which piety leads to the prosperity and security of a land; I mean by the drawing down the blessing of God. If there be a moral governor of the universe, sin must provoke him, and holiness please him; if sin provoke God, he is able to punish it, for the destinies of nations are at his disposal, the balance of power is in his hand: bodies of men, as such, are rewardable and punishable only in this world, as death dissolves all bands, and reduces society to its elements, allowing the existence of neither families, churches, nor nations in eternity. God's determination to punish guilty nations, and to bless virtuous ones, is declared on the pages of Scripture, and confirmed by the details of history. Hearken to the awful denunciations of Jehovah. "At what instant, I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up and to pull down and to destroy it, if that nation against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them. And at what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it, if it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice, then I will repent of the good wherewith I said I would benefit them."

And he has most awfully fulfilled these words. Where are Nineveh, Babylon, Tyre, Athens, Jerusalem, and ancient Rome? Vanished from the earth, except a few melancholy ruins, which lie like their mouldering bones, around the grave's mouth, while the destroying angel, the spirit of desolation, still lingers on each vast sepulchre, to proclaim for the admonition of the earth, "See therefore, and know that it is an evil and a bitter thing to sin against the Lord." And over other lands still numbered amongst living nations, do we not see the awful "image of jealousy" arising, and do we not hear an awful voice declaring, "Behold the day of the Lord cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate, and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it. For the stars of heaven, and the constellations thereof shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine: and I will punish the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; and I will cause the arrogancy of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible." It is sin then that ruins a kingdom, holiness that preserves it. O my country, mayest thou have wisdom to know and value this true secret of national greatness: and to remember that there is no kingdom so high but vice will bring it down and lay it low even in the dust; none so humble but virtue may raise it to the pinnacle of prosperity. Religion is thy strength, more than commerce, or the arts, or martial prowess: and mayest thou never, never, part with this, under the wiles of any seducing spirit, whether false philosophy, infidelity, or immorality; for then shalt thou be seen like Sampson when shorn of his hair, a miserable captive in the hands of the

Philistines, and an object of sport to the enemies, who had so often trembled and crouched under the power of his arm.

Every good man then, whether his piety blaze like the sun in a public station, or like the modest taper, shed its solitary ray in a private one; whether it fix the attention of a nation from a throne, or of a hamlet from a cottage, is a patriot of the purest kind, a philanthropist of the loftiest order. His example arrests the progress of sin, and limits the overflowing of ungodliness; his principles, like precious seeds, contain a self-propagating power, and diffuse themselves over society: his prayers avert the wrath, and bring down the blessing of God upon the land: his property and his influence, are given to support the schemes which are intended to relieve misery, to instruct ignorance, to reform vice. He is the salt of the earth; a moral anti-septic, counteracting the causes of decay introduced into all social institutions by their imperfections and human depravity. Of how great consequence is it that such men should be multiplied in the land; and how truly may it be said of those whose life is spent in increasing the number, that they are in an eminent degree, the defence and the glory of their country. This honour belongs to the ministers of religion, but only to those whose moral character is unreproachable, and whose piety is unsuspected.

Ministers of an opposite description, whose want of personal religion is apparent, or whose moral character is not without a stain, or whose spirit is secular, or who are devoted to the fashionable follies and polluting amusements of the age, such men, instead of being the

horsemen of Israel, and the chariots thereof, are its enemies in disguise; they are so much thrown into the scale of a country's ruin; they furnish the infidel with his arguments, the scoffer with his jests, and the profane with an apology for himself; they cause the ways of religion to be ill spoken of, and produce an inveterate dislike of true piety in many minds. But the men who live the truth they preach; whose actions are to their sermons what the illustrative experiment is to the lecture; who to all that is lofty and evangelical in doctrine, unite all that is pure, upright, meek, and benevolent in practice; who can invite scrutiny into their conduct, and can say to every doubtful and prejudiced enquirer, "come and see;" such men, if they be not eloquent as orators, yet as they are consistent as Christians; if they dart no coruscations of genius from the pulpit, yet as they diffuse the radiance of a holy and blameless example, are the best friends, the surest defence, and the brightest ornaments of their country. No matter what the denomination to which they belong; no matter what the name by which they are called; no matter what the altar before which they minister; independently of these minor considerations, they contribute to national prosperity, by preaching the truth as it is in Jesus, and by adorning the doctrine of God their Saviour in all things. Their conduct is more conspicuous, and therefore more influential, than the virtue of a private Christian; the weight of authority is employed to give force to example; and attachment softens the heart to receive the impression of their excellencies. They are sufficiently near their people to allow the inspection, which is essential to imitation, and yet sufficiently removed to possess the interest, which is imparted by distance.

The pulpit, however, is the great means by which holy and consistent ministers extend through a nation the benefits of religion, and the fruits of virtue. Preaching is ordained by God to be the great instrument for the production and the maturity of moral excellence. The conversion of the sinner, and the progressive sanctification of the believer, are promoted more effectually by the sermons of an energetic preacher than by all the other means of religious instruction and impression combined. "Of all methods for diffusing religion," says one of the greatest moral writers of the day, "preaching is the most efficient: other methods are indirect and preparatory; but the simple proclaiming of the gospel has, in all ages, been attended with the most transforming efficacy; elevating the few who have cordially accepted it into a higher and happier state of being, and even raising the many who have rejected it to a better system of moral opinions. It is to preaching that Christianity owes its origin, its continuance, and its progress; and it is to itinerant preaching, however much the ignorant may undervalue it, that we owe the conversion of the Roman world from paganism to primitive Christianity; our own freedom from the thraldom of Popery in the success of the Reformation; and the revival of Christianity at the present day, from the depression which it had undergone, owing to the prevalence of infidelity and indifference. Books, however excellent, require at least some previous interest on the part of the person who is to open and peruse them; but the preacher arrests that attention, which the written record only invites; and the living voice, and the listening numbers, heighten the impression by the sympathy and enthusiasm which they excite; the reality which the truths spoken

possess in the mind of the speaker, is communicated to the feelings of the hearers, and they end in sharing the same views, at least for the moment, and in augmenting each others convictions."*

This is the testimony of a layman, corroborated alike by the deductions of reason and the details of experience. Let the sabbath for a few years be merged in the days devoted to secular pursuits: let the order of the ministry be lost, and the voice of the faithful preacher be hushed, and whatever other methods of religious instruction remain, you will soon see the consequence, in the universal increase of immorality; immorality will call for infidelity to tolerate its excesses, and shield it from remorse; while infidelity will encourage immorality as the most zealous supporter of its usurpations. The pulpit is the strongest barrier against the encroachments of vice, and the most impregnable bulwark of national virtue. Senators are usefully employed in making laws to define crime, judges in detecting and punishing it, but ministers prevent it, by inspiring an abhorrence of whatever is displeasing to God, injurious to society, and disgraceful to humanity. Neither legislators nor magistrates ever pretend to produce a love of virtue: all they hope to accomplish is to protect her from the insults, and prevent her from being destroyed by the outrages of vice; but to inspire mankind with the love of her charms, and induce them to submit to her sway as the empress of the world, is the especial business of the minister of truth: and thus does he benefit his country and mankind at large. In this view of the subject a minister may be expected to be useful in proportion to his talents, his virtues, and his

* "The Advancement of Society in Knowledge and Religion," by James Douglas, Esq.

energies. There are some who are gifted above their fellows; there are stars of the first magnitude and brilliancy in the firmament of the church; men who by their books, as well as by their preaching, by the wisdom of their opinions, and the ardour of their zeal, give the direction of public opinion, and the tone of public feeling; master spirits, who are formed, qualified, and commissioned to lead the multitude, and to whose influence the multitude most willingly bow down. Who can calculate the amount of benefit conferred upon the country and the world by such men as Whitfield, Wesley, Edwards, and Doddridge? or by the more modern advocates of the cause of evangelical truth, Cecil, Scott; Fuller, and Hall; and by our illustrious friend, who has lately departed. While such men lived and laboured, they were confessed to be the defence and ornaments of their country, and when they were removed, innumerable voices exclaimed, "My father, my father! the horsemen of Israel, and the chariots thereof."

II. Eminent ministers are not suffered to remain, but are removed by death, notwithstanding their usefulness, from the scene of their labours. Neither great talents, nor eminent virtues, nor extensive usefulness, can secure for their possessor a longer exemption from the stroke of death than falls to the lot of humanity in general. The most excellent of the human race are subject to the same law of existence as the most worthless; the most useful to the same rule as the most mischievous. Sin has diffused an incurable taint of mortality through the whole body, which affects not only the extremities, but reaches the head. "The voice said, cry; and he said, what shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof as the flower of the

field. The grass withereth, the flower thereof fadeth, because the spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it." There is, indeed, no border country, no neutral territory, no sacred enclosure, within which the holy and benevolent may retire to carry on their labours, and protract their usefulness, secure from the pursuit of disease and death.

What men have visited our earth! what lofty spirits have been here! What Godlike minds have appeared on the theatre of our world! What burning and shining lights have thrown the splendours of hallowed genius over this dark scene! But they are vanished and gone. By a single effort of the imagination we can call up a crowd of illustrious personages, who have enlightened the earth by their knowledge, sanctified it by their piety, and blessed it by their benevolence. For awhile we seem to converse with these mighty and holy ones; but the spell is soon broken, and we find that we have nothing but their names. What lights of the sanctuary have been extinguished; what heaven-inspired eloquence has been hushed; what powerful energies have been paralysed! Oh! sin, what has thou done? Our globe is the tomb of illustrious men, and the materials of ecclesiastical history consist of monumental inscriptions. Ministers, having partaken of the common depravity of our nature, must endure its consequences in the penalty of death; and their pulpit, vacated for their grave, is a visible comment on the evil nature of sin, more impressive than any which they delivered during the whole course of their living labour.

In some cases it may be supposed that they are removed in a way of corrective justice. Prone to extremes, men either undervalue or overvalue their

mercies; and so it is with churches in reference to their pastors. Instances have not been wanting in which ministers possessed of attractive or splendid talents, united with amiable and conciliatory manners, have become the objects of popular homage; sabbath after sabbath, the eager auditors thronged around the pulpit, in which their idol was enshrined, to receive in the strains of his eloquence, the inspiration of their great Apollo. The orator more than the preacher; eloquence more than truth; the sweet melody of voice, or the fascinating beauties of imagination, more than "glad tidings of salvation," were the objects of their delight. Who can wonder, then, if when God is thus forgotten in his creatures, he should become jealous for the honour of his great name, and remove the man who was preferred before him. On the other hand, some undervalue their ministers; and, displeased at their ingratitude, God extinguishes the light they were not disposed to benefit by, and thus awakens them to bewail their past neglect; and the more to prize and improve the means which, in unmerited favour, he still permits them to enjoy.

May we not suppose that God sometimes removes faithful and able ministers, to prove to the world that though he uses instruments, he needs them not. "It is a piece of divine royalty and magnificence, that when he has prepared and polished such a utensil, so as to be capable of great service, he can lay it by without loss." The mortality of ministers shews, that in reference to the cause of religion, the kingdom, the power, and the glory, belong to God. He seems to have made human life short and brittle, that the splendour of his own attributes might more effulgently shine forth in the

preservation and extension of his church upon earth. This mighty and holy fabric is built in an immense burial ground; it rises from a valley of dry bones; all around its base are the tombs of the workmen; prophets and apostles, reformers and martyrs, missionaries and ministers, have successively withered away in the rebuke of the Almighty, and left the work unfinished, for other men to enter upon their labours: but there stands He who alone hath immortality, for ever uttering forth his undying word, amidst the wrecks of ages, and the ruins and relics of all the generations; contrasting his own immutability with the frailty of man, and the permanence of the work with the short-lived existence of the labourer; proclaiming over the building as it rises from the region of death, "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, the first and the last."

Oftentimes the ministers of the gospel are worn out in the service, and retire according to the course of nature, from the scene of their labours to the seat of their repose. They must not always bear the burthen of toil, but go home in due season to enjoy their rest, and receive their reward: they must not always agonise in the closet, the study, the pulpit: they must not always mourn over fruitless sabbaths and unsuccessful sermons: they must not always bear the unkindness of friends and the malice of enemies; the inconsistencies of the church and the wickedness of the world: they must not always fight the good fight of faith. No, if to abide in the flesh be more needful for their people, to depart and be with Christ is that better state which God in his mercy has prepared for them.

III. The removal of ministers from the scene of their labours is matter of divine appointment, and all

its circumstances of time and place, are according to the counsels of unerring wisdom. Elijah's translation was pre-arranged by his master in all its particulars; and the removal of men of less distinction in the church although not a matter of such extensive interest, is no less subject to the divine appointment. If it were possible to conceive that any events connected with the history of man were abandoned to the misrule of chance, all believers in the immortality of the soul would feel disposed, even in the absence of revelation, to ascribe his exit from the world to an interposition of the Deity. The transit of an immortal spirit from the scenes of a probationary state to the decision of her fate, the entrance of a soul upon her unchanging destiny, is an event which though repeated many thousand times each passing day, is manifestly an occurrence of greater moment than the revolution of an empire, so far as its temporal history is concerned. Revelation, however, leaves not this matter to the deductions of reason, but pronounces with authority on the subject. Even on the field of battle, that harvest of death where mortals are hurried by thousands into eternity, where he seems left to carry on his havoc without limit or control, every ball has its commission, and is guided in its flight; even there does Providence accomplish its purposes with reference to individual life, undisturbed and unconfounded amidst the shock of battle, the ruin of defeat, and the madness of victory, no less than in the chamber where the monarch or the minister breathes his last. No, my brethren, chance has nothing to do with life; not the outcast infant of a day old, exposed by its unnatural mother to perish by the tiger or the vulture; not even the sparrow that dies of hunger in its nest, passes out

of life without the knowledge of God. "I am he," said Christ, "that liveth and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore, amen; and have the keys of the unseen world and of death." What consolation is there in this sublime declaration! The key of life is never for a moment trusted out of his hands, never can be wrested from them. Every time a human being dies, it is by an act of his power, in turning the key which unlocks the gates of death. Our life is under the constant and strict observation of his omniscient eye. He determines the moment when to take the key from his girdle, and throw back on their mighty hinges the portals of immortality. O, what comfort does this impart to us, in reference to our own lives, to know that exposed as we are to all the accidents and diseases of this world of changes, and enveloped as we are in darkness as to the consequences of the next step, and the events of the next hour, we cannot die by a random stroke, or by a blind chance; the key must be turned by him who is infinitely wise, and powerful, and good: and what consolation does it also impart at the grave of those of our friends who have been carried away from scenes of usefulness and labours of importance, to be assured that their removal was effected by him who knew all that they were doing, and who makes himself responsible for all the consequences of their death.

IV. The removal of eminent ministers is attended with circumstances which redound to their honour. No car of fire, no horses of flame, carry them to the skies by another road than that of the dark valley of the shadow of death; they must submit to the penalty of sin, and take the grave in their way to the crown: but there are other marks of distinction, other honours than

a chariot of fire for those who serve God and their race. What a deep and wide-spread interest is fixed on the chamber in which they are expected soon to expire; what sensibilities are set in motion; what sympathy is excited; what prayers of intercessory deprecation are uttered; the whole neighbourhood feels an instinctive dread as at the approach of some great catastrophe. And when the stroke has fallen, and the labouring saint has been dismissed to his rest, what tears of regret are shed, what bitter lamentations are heard. All around seem to be partakers of a common calamity: the aged exclaim, "Alas, my brother;" the younger, "Alas, my father;" each has some tribute of respect to pay to his memory, some fondly cherished recollection of untold favours, or some secret act of goodness to disclose; some cheering anecdote to tell, or some peculiar cause of bitter regret to acknowledge. Public tokens of commiseration are exhibited; a long and melancholy train of mourning and devout men carry him to his burial; a loud deep groan is heaved from the bosom of the church, and is returned in faithful echo from the world; while the general lamentation prolongs the tribute, in the eulogium of Elisha, "The horsemen of Israel, and the chariot thereof."* This is the honour he receives from earth; and it is that which every good man may lawfully seek: it is an object of just and honourable ambition not only to live respected, but to die lamented: an honoured sepulchre is not only the reward of departed saints, but the stimulus of living ones.

But who can describe, or who conceive, the honour

* The Editor's love and gratitude compel him to notice that never was this description more truly exemplified than at the decease of the Author himself, all delighted to do him honour.

that awaits the departed minister above. Isaiah, in one of the most sublime and beautiful of his figures, has represented hell moved from beneath to meet the king of Babylon at his entrance upon the unseen world; while the chief ones of the earth, the kings of the nations, rising from their thrones, taunt him with his degradation to their level. "Art thou also become weak as we? Art thou become like unto us? How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning!" A scene, the bright reverse of this, awaits the entrance of a faithful and holy minister of Christ into the celestial city. We can imagine how heaven is moved to meet him at his coming; how "the great multitude which no man can count, who have washed their robes, and made them white and clean in the blood of the Lamb," and especially those of the number who owe their felicity to his labours, and who have preceded him in his decease, greet him to the skies; how prophets and apostles, reformers and martyrs, ministers and missionaries, rising from their seats of rest and glory, conduct him into the presence of his Lord, exclaiming, "Thus shall it be done unto the man whom God delighteth to honour;" while he that sitteth upon the throne will confirm and approve the welcome, and as he places the crown of life upon his brows shall say, "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." Applauding millions catch the note, and Well done, good and faithful servant, well done, well done! is repeated by voices pealing upon the ear, as the sound of many waters.

I now come to that part of the discourse in which it is intended to give an outline of the history and character of that great and good man whose decease has

produced so deep an impression on the public mind. Doctor David Bogue was a native of Scotland, and received his education in the University of Edinburgh. On coming to England he was first engaged as an assistant to Mr. Smith, and preached in connection with that gentleman for several years, in Silver Street Chapel, London. He removed to Gosport in the year 1777. Here his ministry proved so acceptable and useful that a new place of worship was erected for him. During the early period of his labours in this town, very powerful inducement was held out to him to quit the Independent denomination, and become a Presbyterian minister in his native country. An offer was made him by Mr. Dundas, afterwards Lord Melville, of one of the principal churches in the city of Edinburgh, through the influence of Admiral Lord Duncan, whose son he baptised. This he declined, no doubt under the direction of the great Master whom he served, and who had appointed him to a sphere of extensive usefulness in the land of his adoption.*

His labours as a tutor commenced in the year 1789. Mr. Welch, a rich banker of London, (who, in connection with that eminent Christian philanthropist, the late Mr. Thornton, of Clapham, had already supported a private academy at Painswick, under the tuition of Mr. Cornelius Winter,) proposed to our deceased friend that he should undertake the education of three young men for the ministry, at his expense. With this request he complied, and very soon commenced his instructions. It would be difficult to devise a way by which the affluent members of the dissenting body could more

* The Author had this fact from Dr. Buchanan, the venerable and esteemed senior minister of the Canongate Church, in Edinburgh.

effectively promote the interests of their own community, or of religion in general, than by supporting during their education young men for the office of the christian ministry. Pastors are still needed, especially men of talents and of learning; and that individual confers a lasting favour upon the Church and the world who sends forth one well educated minister into the kingdom of Christ. Who can calculate where and when the effects of such an act of beneficence would terminate?

It must be acknowledged that the term of study in the Gosport academy was too short to allow its tutor to devote much time to classical pursuits, and that consequently, his object was rather to make his pupils good theologians than men of literature or of science. There is nothing incompatible, however, between the most extensive learning, or the profoundest philosophy, and the greatest excellence as a theoretical and practical divine. "All philosophy," says Cudworth, "to a wise man, to a truly sanctified mind, is but matter for Divinity to work upon. Religion is the queen of all those inward endowments of the soul; and all pure natural knowledge, all virgin arts and sciences are her handmaids, that rise up and call her blessed."*

The next great event in the life of Dr. Bogue is one the influence of which is still felt, and will continue to increase, till the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the

* Dr. Bogue was prepared for his career by nine or ten years' study at the High School and University of Edinburgh. At the age of thirteen he could converse fluently in the Latin language, and read it of course with as much facility as English.

[Part of this note is omitted, because the substance of it is given in the charge to the Rev. Thomas James.]

earth, as the waters do the channel of the sea. His benevolent and active mind surveyed with deepest concern the moral state of the world. Although several religious denominations had begun to exert themselves in the cause of missions to the heathens, the Independents had yet done nothing; and a sense of obligation in this respect pressed but lightly on the consciences of Christians in general. He therefore published a letter in the "Evangelical Magazine," for September, 1794, in which he called upon all the churches of Christ, and those of his own denomination in particular, to "come forth to the help of the Lord against the mighty." This address, which was remarkable for its pungency and pathos, was read, through the wide circulation of the magazine, in every part of the kingdom, and kindled its own benevolent and sacred ardour in thousands of holy minds at once. Many awakened from the slumbers which they had too long indulged amidst the groans of creation, and confessed that the work of attempting to spread the Gospel in the world, was not merely matter of gratification, but of duty; not only a romantic enterprise, such as to fascinate an ardent and pious imagination, but a matter of imperative obligation upon every renewed heart. The first published reply to this letter was from that profound theologian, the Rev. Dr. Williams, then the pastor of this church; from whose communication it appears that the subject of Christian missions had long occupied the attention of the Warwickshire Associated Ministers, and that they had in June, 1793, passed resolutions in which Dr. Williams was appointed to draw up a circular letter on the subject, and a subscription was commenced for its support.

The letter in the magazine produced much conversation and correspondence, till at length, on the memorable fourth of November, 1794, the first called meeting, with a view to the formation of a society, took place. It was a small but glowing and harmonious circle of ministers of various denominations; and they adopted a resolution to establish an institution for spreading the Gospel in the world. From the commencement it was determined that this society should be formed upon the broadest basis, so as to secure the co-operation of all who loved our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, and were willing to give it their assistance. Never was an institution founded more entirely under the influence of unmixed philanthropy than this; never was a body of men brought together more exclusively by the attraction of Christian love, than that which projected this society; and never was there an object presented to the public mind more pure than this from the least stain or imputation of sectarian zeal. Churchmen and Dissenters; Presbyterians, Independents, and Calvinistic Methodists, together became the patrons of the infant cause, and at the first meeting, held in September, 1795, presented it to the public as the child of their united adoption, affection, and solicitude. At this meeting Dr. Bogue preached a masterly sermon, since printed, entitled "Objections to a Mission to the Heathen stated and considered;" in it sound argument supports all that is tender in appeals to the feelings, and all that is forcible in appeals to the conscience. This discourse must have enlightened the judgment, interested the heart, and encouraged the hopes of every auditor, and left without excuse all who refused their help. Thus was founded a society which

has never ceased from that moment to the present, to engage and interest the public mind in the cause of God and of man; and which will never cease its labours till all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of God; and of that society our friend was in a considerable degree the originator. If its first proceedings were not marked by the sound discretion which has characterised its later efforts, the path was untrodden; and it must be confessed that the benevolent and romantic project of sending out a ship to the antipodes, to carry a band of missionaries to convert to Christianity the islanders of the Pacific ocean, was an event so novel and so striking, that it roused public attention at once, and kept it awake to the subject of Christian missions; and probably some such event was necessary to interest the feelings of the multitude, who are wrought upon more by facts than by arguments.

From this time our venerable friend took the deepest and liveliest interest in all the proceedings of the Missionary Society: assisting its councils by his wisdom, and exciting the zeal of the churches by his sermons; and so regularly attending all its public annual meetings, that to the day of his death, it was his unostentatious boast that he had never been absent but once, when he was prevented by severe bodily affliction. The next meeting will appear by the absence of his venerated form to have lost one of its chief ornaments, and by the silence of his voice will be deprived of one of its best advocates. So entirely was his heart engaged in the missionary cause, that he had determined upon going himself to India, in company with two eminent ministers of Scotland, and a distinguished layman of con-

siderable wealth and talents. From this he was prevented by the interposition of an authority,* now happily less powerful, and less suspicious than it was at that time.

The year 1800 witnessed his appointment to the arduous and responsible situation of tutor to the Missionary Academy, while retaining his former students who were preparing for the ministry in this country. And most interesting was it (as I well recollect) to see men sitting round his chair, and receiving instruction from his lips, some of whom were destined to labour in the united kingdom, while others were intended to carry the gospel to various nations of the world; so that Europe, Asia, Africa, and America were all waiting to receive ministers of religion from his hands.

At the request of the Missionary Society, then directing a share of its benevolent attention to the moral state of France, he was requested to draw up an essay on the divine authority of the New Testament, with a view to its being circulated in that country, in which infidelity was then triumphant. This request produced his excellent volume on the evidences of Christianity, which has been translated into French and Italian, and deservedly obtained a very wide circulation, both at home and abroad, and a copy of it, it is believed, fell into the hands of Napoleon Bonaparte, during the last months of his captivity on the rock of St. Helena.

Besides this volume, his published works consisted

* There is no reason now for omitting to name the East India Company as the great enemy to the spread of Christianity in the East. We have seen the Company lose its existence through the rebellion of their favoured Brahmins. Ed.

of sermons preached on public* and funeral occasions: "A history of Dissenters," undertaken in conjunction with his friend and former pupil, the Rev. [Dr.] James Bennett, and "A volume of discourses on the Millennium," the great excellence of which is, that it gives a plain scriptural state of the moral condition of the world, during the period of its latter day of glory, with the means which will accelerate it, without rashly pretending to explain all the prophetic times and symbols, as some have done, to the endless contradiction and confutation of each other, the sport of infidels, and the discredit of prophecy itself. It was his opinion that time and events are the best interpreters of the signs and arithmetic of Daniel and John.

Amidst such multiplied, varied, and important labours, did the life of this venerated man pass away. Some idea may be entertained of the extent of his efforts, and the amount of his usefulness, when it is recollected that as a minister he was for more than half a century the able and zealous advocate of the doctrines of the gospel, preaching three times every Sabbath, with little interruption to the last day of his labours, and extensively travelling every year in England, Scotland, Wales, or Ireland: that as a tutor, he has educated nearly a hundred ministers and missionaries: that as an author, he has sent an able defence of Christianity into kingdoms which were inaccessible to his personal labours: that as

* Amongst these is one of much excellence, entitled "The great Importance of having right Sentiments in Religion," preached before the Hampshire Association, at Ringwood, July, 1788. I think this excellent tract was his first publication. It well deserves to be reprinted.

a public spirited individual, he originated the Missionary Society, assisted at the formation of the Bible and Tract Societies, and in short, did more to keep up the feeling of religious zeal, than any other single individual who was contemporary with him; besides maintaining an extensive correspondence on the state of religion, with almost all parts of the world. Nothing good or great was projected for the moral benefit of mankind, to which he was not ever ready to afford the energies of his great mind. I speak deliberately, when I express it as my conviction, that there are few individuals of this age, and but few of any age, to whom the world in its future state of millennial purity and peace, will owe so much as to him.

His devotedness to the great objects of his zeal was undivided, and his diligence in the prosecution of them steady and unwearied. During the earlier part of his ministry, his application to study was so intense, that the morning star was often above the horizon before his midnight lamp was extinguished: and during the latter part, no less intense was his application to all the duties of his calling as a public character. He seemed to have neither inclination nor leisure, for many of the lighter, though lawful enjoyments of social life; but appeared like a man who felt that he had one great business to do in this world; and that one so vast as to require and to deserve the concentration of all his energies, and the employment of all his time. At home and abroad, he seemed ever engaged for the religious welfare of the human race: to this his journies and his visits were generally made subservient; for he wanted neither recreation nor pleasure, separate and apart from that which arises from going about to do good. I have

ever considered him since I knew him, as a noble instance of decision of character; and it is delightful to consider that this decision was in the cause of religion, virtue, and human felicity. Happily he was blessed with a constitution, which sustained with ease his great exertions; owing to which, it must be confessed, that in his zeal against indolence, especially in ministers, he did not always distinguish between weakness and laziness; and sometimes administered blame, where he ought to have offered sympathy. It was his maxim that a minister of the gospel is the last man on earth, who should suppose that he has a moment to waste.

From this statement it will be seen that he is entitled to a high rank among philanthropists; though his philanthropy was of a kind which the multitude, for want of the faith which looks at things unseen and eternal, will not be able either to admire or understand. There are not a few even amiable and well disposed persons, who with the most zealous disposition to instruct the ignorant, to relieve the miserable, to reform the vicious, within our own shores, and even to redress the wrongs of Africa abroad, have never yet comprehended the grandeur of the missionary enterprise, or caught "the heroic passion of saving souls." Their benevolence is bounded by the narrow horizon of the present world, it does not soar above the clouds which envelope mortality, to contemplate and pursue the glories of eternity. I do not under-rate their efforts in the cause of humanity, but only regret that it stops short of man's bitterest and most lasting woes. I can admire the glory of that man's character, and appreciate both the sacrifices he made, and the benefits he conferred, who spent his life in plunging into the darkness of dungeons, for the sake

of the captive, and exposing himself to the contagious atmosphere of lazarettoes, for the benefit of the diseased: he is worthy of all the admiration and praise which his name never fails to awaken: but still, inasmuch as the soul is of infinitely greater importance than the body; heaven than earth; eternity than time; zeal for the spread of religion is a far sublimer passion, than zeal for the diminution of present misery: it aims at relieving the noblest part of our nature; it extends to man a blessing eternal as his existence; it carries the seed of all other benefits in its bosom, and imparts a balm for the woes that are utterly incurable. Such was the philanthropy of him whose loss we now deplore. The conversion of the world to Christ was his object; the termination of the reign of Islamism, Paganism, Judaism, and infidelity; with the destruction of every system that enslaves the mind, corrupts the heart, and damns the soul. The benevolence of God cannot rise higher; the benevolence of a Christian should not sink lower. This is in an eminent sense to have "fellowship with the Father, and with his Son, Jesus Christ." Let religion be dominant on earth, and the tears of mankind, if not utterly dried up, will be irradiated like the falling shower in spring, by smiling sunbeams; and the groans of creation will die away in the songs of salvation. Sin and error are the most abundant sources of human wretchedness, and he is the greatest philanthropist who ascends with revelation to stop these fountains of bitter waters. And in that age which, however distant it may be, will assuredly arrive, when the crimes and curses of society will have given way to the universal reign of piety and happiness, whose memory will regenerated nations cherish with the greatest fondness?

Whose schemes will the whole earth acknowledge with most fervent gratitude? I conjecture, brethren, not those of poets or novelists; of warriors or travellers; of philosophers or scholars; of artists or mechanicians; all these indeed, shall have their meed of praise, so far as they have done anything to civilize or to refine society, but the chief veneration, affection, and thankfulness, will be reserved for those who diffused religion, which while it conducts men to glory, honour, and immortality, scatters all the benefits of social order along the path by which it leads them to the skies.

That which gave the solid basis and the lasting support to Dr. Bogue's great public character, was his private and personal excellence as a man and as a Christian. A bad private character can never make a good public one. An individual who starts in the honourable career of public usefulness, must take unblemished virtue with him, or he will inevitably fail. He may succeed for a while by the aid of powerful talents, or by arts which dazzle and avert the eye of observation, or by a peculiar adaptation to some popular scheme; but if his reputation be stained or suspected, he will soon be deserted. The coadjutors which our dear friend drew around him by his talents and his zeal, he retained by his virtues. His piety was unsuspected, his morals were unimpeached, his prudence was remarkable, and his sobriety of judgment eminent. There was nothing suspicious which made any one ashamed to be united with him; nothing fickle or frivolous to make them afraid of embarking with him. There was an occasional sternness of manner, but it rarely degenerated into rudeness; there was an occasional approach to what was overbearing, but he endured opposition:

I have heard him violent in the heat of debate, but the still small voice of kindness soon succeeded to the whirlwind and the storm. We had confidence in his abilities, his motives, and his excellencies; and we always felt disposed to bear with the vehemence with which his views were sometimes expressed.

He was a most enlightened and ardent friend of civil and religious liberty, and took a deep interest in the awful struggles and convulsions of the times in which he lived; but it may be probably affirmed that his religious feelings prevented him from sailing too widely on the stormy ocean of politics. He viewed with equal abhorrence the tyranny of monarchs and of priests, as tending to obstruct the moral improvement of mankind; at the same time, he was most cordially attached to the constitution of this country. It was his advice to his students not to meddle with party politics, but he inspired them with enlightened zeal for the principles of rational liberty. He took an active part, I believe, in the attempts which were made in the years 1787 and 1790 for the repeal of the Corporation and Test Acts; those foul blots on the statute book of this country which every dissenter must regard as a relic of intolerance, and every consistent Christian as an instance of profanation.

He cannot be considered as having possessed great brilliancy of genius, or splendour of imagination; his classical acquirements were respectable, but he was neither an erudite scholar nor a profound mathematician; he was not an acute metaphysician or an eloquent orator; but he possessed a powerful and comprehensive mind, filled with varied and extensive information, great principles, and benevolent feelings: his

was a Doric strength and grandeur of character, fitted rather to support a public cause, than to adorn it with adventitious decorations. He had a power of perception which could distinguish and seize a sublime object; a steadiness of mind which could not be diverted by novelty; a firmness of purpose not to be shaken by discouragement; an inherent love of activity, which labour could not weary; a courage which danger could not appal; and a patience which delay could not exhaust. He presented, as it appears to me, one of the finest models for the formation of public character; for he had a vigorous understanding, unaccompanied by any eccentricity of genius to mislead it; consistent piety, without the least degree of imprudence to lesson its influence; zeal without enthusiasm; and benevolence without credulity.

During the latter period of his life he was severely tried by domestic affliction, and was thus placed in a situation which afforded him an opportunity of uniting the milder beauty of the passive graces with the bold energy of the active virtues. About eleven years ago he was deprived by death of one of his sons, who sunk to the tomb at the age of twenty-two: about the same time his eldest daughter settled in America. Three years since the destroyer entered his habitation a second time, and laid another of his sons in the grave. The venerable minister, then nearly seventy-three years of age, removed equally from unmanly stoicism and unchristian sorrow, preached a funeral sermon for his child, in which all the father appeared supported and hallowed by all the saint. A touching memoir of these two young men was drawn up by a surviving brother, and printed with the funeral sermon just alluded to for

private circulation. Mr. David Bogue, the author, was then the classical tutor in the academy over which his revered father presided, and discharged the duties of the office with singular ability, and will ever be remembered with delight and gratitude by those who enjoyed his instruction. About a year and half ago Mrs. Bogue, whose constitution never recovered the shock it received from the death of her sons, followed them to the sepulchre, and left her bereaved husband to prove by experience that there is a woe for mortals far more bitter than the loss of children. David, who had then devoted his fine talents to the legal profession, and bid fair to be a bright ornament of the English bar,* was destined to be the next victim. He, too, like a flower broken from its stem just when putting forth its full blown beauty and its richest fragrance, fell with all his youthful honours on the ashes of his mother and his brothers. And how did the father bear this fourfold bereavement? Like one that recognised in every stroke the appointment of God, who however seemingly severe in his dealings, or really mysterious in his schemes, is always wise, and just, and good; like one who knew that his own approaching dissolution would soon restore to him those dear friends torn from him by the ruthless hand of the last enemy. His unmarried daughter still remained like a ministering angel to comfort him in his old age, to be the companion of his home, and the light of his dreary habitation; but the assiduities of filial love and the tender offices of sisterly affection, performed at the dying beds of a mother and three brothers, were

* He was a pupil of Lord Chancellor Cottenham (himself the best junior counsel that ever signed a bill), and was always spoken of by him as his best pupil. Mr. John Bogue was a solicitor in London.—Ed.

too much for her strength, and she returned from the funeral obsequies of David to prepare for her own. They have not yet arrived, but cannot be far distant. Her eye is on the grave of her family; her hope is with their spirits above; and soon, in all probability, will the last of her prayers be heard, and her soul be united in the heavenly state with those whom she loved upon earth. Her father, though called to endure the affliction of seeing her suffer, and of anticipating her removal, was spared this last woe. Never were afflictions borne with more dignified grief, or more christian submission. It seemed as if the clouds of sorrow were permitted to collect around his setting sun only to reflect more brightly as he was retiring from earth the varied effulgence of his christian character.

We now approach the closing scene. "His sermons," says one of his students in a letter to a friend, "have of late been much on the heavenly state; he has just finished a course on the 'Transfiguration,' and there he was heavenly indeed. Sabbath week was the last day he addressed his people. In the morning he preached a funeral sermon for a son-in-law of Mr. Griffin, of Portsea. In the afternoon and evening he preached at Gosport, from Genesis v, 24. 'And Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him.' The character of the patriarch was exhibited in the afternoon, his translation was reserved for the evening's discourse. He was full of his subject, and seemed almost in the heavenly state." This was his last sermon. Like his great Master, he died on the field, and fell at his post. The Missionary Society had his last labours and his last prayers. On the Tuesday he went to Brighton, to attend a Missionary Meeting at which he was to preach.

He was present at the first service, and engaged in prayer, but was soon after seized with an internal obstruction, which yielded neither to medicine nor to skill. During his last illness, he spoke but little, but that little was of the very best kind. At first he was not aware of his danger, but when the solemn announcement was made to him, he immediately said, "The Lord's will be done." During the progress of his disease, his mind, true to the favourite object of his heart, as the magnet to the pole, seemed much engaged upon the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom upon earth: and he spoke several times of his joy in knowing that there were many excellent and useful ministers rising up in support of that great cause. After five days of acute suffering, mortification ensued, and on Tuesday, the twenty-fourth of October, he rested from his labours and his sufferings, and entered into the joy of his Lord, in the seventy-sixth year of his age.

Every possible mark of solemn respect to his memory, and of deep affliction for his removal, was paid at his funeral. The shops of the town were closed; between fifty and sixty ministers and students were present, several hundreds of his congregation, and others, formed a long and melancholy train of mourners, and were followed by a vast concourse of spectators, drawn together by affection and not by curiosity. After an address was delivered by the Rev. John Griffin over the revered remains of this eminent servant of God, in the chapel which had been so long the scene of his labours, the funeral procession moved to the parish church at Alverstoke, and the corpse was deposited in the family vault, there to await, in sweet repose, the honours to be conferred on the just, at the morning of the resur-

rection. One funeral sermon was preached by the Rev. Dr. Winter, at Gosport, in the evening; and another on Wednesday morning, November 16th, by the Rev. James Bennett, in the Poultry Chapel London, at the request of the Directors of the Missionary Society.

The loss of such men demands the expression of our chastened grief. The tomb of the wise and the good is a sacred spot, appropriate to sorrow, and tears are a tribute demanded by nature and allowed by religion to the memory of departed excellence. So far as the moral interests of the world are concerned, and they are its most valuable interests, the fall of Newton, Nelson, or Watt, prefers a claim for our regrets, less urgent than the decease of Scott, Fuller, or Bogue.

Our grief in such cases should not repress our gratitude that we have enjoyed for so long a period, the benefit of which we have at length been deprived. To say of such men, "They were," is a painful transition from the exultation with which we so repeatedly exclaimed, "They are:" but even this mournful note is calculated to awaken feelings of thankfulness, as well as of distress, since it tells of the former possession of the blessing lost. The decease of such a man, delayed as it was to his seventy-sixth year, suggests a motive for gratitude that he was so long spared to benefit the church and bless the world. Nor was he the only instance of this kind connected with the Missionary Society. Many aged heads still lift their hoary crowns, whose meridian wisdom helped to form the institution, and to direct its first operations.

Our bereavement of such men should not in the least degree impair our confidence in the cause they served. It is a humbling lesson to human vanity, and tends

to check the growth of self importance, to consider how well the world will go on when we are laid in the dust, and no longer partake in the direction of its affairs. Leaves fall in autumn; trees are felled in the spring; but the next vernal season renews the foliage; another age replaces the veteran oaks removed by the axe or the tempest, and the forest still presents its broad expanse and deep shade to the eye of the traveller. So it is with the church of God; its members and its ministers die, but others are baptised for the dead, and fill up their vacant seats in the spiritual house. It has survived the fall of prophets, apostles, and reformers, and has nothing now to apprehend from the arm of the King of Terrors. He may go on to build the tombs of the prophets, but there is no sepulchre prepared for the Bible, no grave for the cause of our Divine Redeemer. Supported as that cause is by Him who is the fountain of life, we need be in no alarm when the cisterns are broken and the streams are dried. Some of the founders of the Missionary Society are gone, and others are on the wing; but the cause itself, like a victorious army, after performing sepulchral rites, and paying funeral honours to fallen heroes, will still be led to conflict by "the Captain of our salvation," and "go on from conquering to conquer."

Such instances of mortality should send us to the throne of grace with importunate supplication for a copious effusion of the Spirit to raise up other men of "like precious faith," of similar zeal and equal talents. The residue of the Spirit is with God. The holy fire still burns on that altar from which the seraphim borrowed the live coal to kindle and purify the prophet's eloquence; from which sacred genius has in every age

lighted the torch which has illuminated the world: and more earnest prayer on the part of the churches will still continue to multiply upon earth these flames of light and love.

The recollection of the talents, virtues, and usefulness of eminent ministers, together with the consciousness of their loss, should excite a spirit of emulation in those that remain. "It is a homage due to departed worth, whenever it rises to such a height as to render its possessor an object of general attention, to endeavour to rescue it from oblivion, that when it is removed from the observation of men, it may still live in their memory, and transmit, through the shades of the sepulchre, some reflection, however faint, of its living lustre." But the best way of rescuing a bright example from oblivion is by multiplying and diffusing its copies; these give an earthly immortality to the original, and prevent its being unknown or forgotten, as long as one of them remains. Imitation is the most sincere, the most effective expression of admiration in those cases where imitation is possible. Dr. Bogue is no more; let those who admired his virtues, strive to resemble them. This is the best way to honour his memory, and the only means left us to repair his loss.

May those who are in the meridian or in the morning of their strength, and especially they, who, like myself, were brought up at his feet, emulate his piety, his zeal, and his diligence. To us he has in a peculiar manner bequeathed the Missionary Society in trust for the world: a sacred, an awful, and a responsible deposit: nations unknown and unborn; the millions of rational creatures that are upon the globe; the more countless millions that will be; all the ages of posterity, and all

the ends of the earth, are interested in a great degree in the manner in which we, and others in similar circumstances, discharge our obligations. Oh, let us beware how we fulfil the tremendous trust which is thus reposed in our hands; seeing we must account for it to Him who shall judge the living and the dead in that day when the history of time shall close, and the destinies of eternity shall commence.

MISSIONARY PROSPECTS.

A SERMON,

THE SUBSTANCE OF WHICH WAS DELIVERED IN HOXTON CHAPEL,

ON TUESDAY EVENING, OCTOBER 10, 1826,

AT THE OPENING OF HOXTON COLLEGE

AS A MISSIONARY ACADEMY.

John iii, 30.

He must increase.

Such was the prediction delivered by the forerunner of our Lord, in reference to the future progress of Messiah's kingdom. The sun of righteousness had just appeared above the horizon of the moral world, and the morning star was contentedly vanishing from observation amidst the growing splendour of the orb of day. Already has the announcement of John been verified in an astonishing and delightful degree. He who came alone and as the Man of Sorrows, from the obscurity of Nazareth, and bearing its reproach, he who was met at his entrance on his mission with scorn and contumely, indignation and opposition, he who "was despised and rejected of men," continually increased in the number of his followers and the extent of his reign. Christianity, unsupported by worldly power, and unadorned by worldly pomp, rapidly made her way through the earth against the united forces of rage and ridicule, of policy and government, which were marshalled for her destruction. Myriads in Judea acknowledged him to be the Son of God who had expired upon the cross of Calvary. From Judea the gospel spread through Syria; from Syria through the provinces of Asia Minor; thence it

crossed the Hellespont, passed into Europe, and diffused its simple glory and spiritual influence over the scenes of classic story. "The world trembled at its guilt, and blushed at those profane and impure fables which it had received as the doctrines of religion." Greece and Rome, by joint consent, sacrificed before the cross, in one vast hecatomb, thousands of statues and idols, and surrendered to destruction their fascinating mythology, which genius had invented, time had consecrated, art had decorated, poetry had celebrated, and which was dear to the depravity of its votaries for the license which it gave to vice. Within three centuries after the death of Christ nearly the whole civilised world was professedly Christian, and thus furnished a proof of the divine origin of the gospel, the force of which artifice cannot evade, nor argument resist, nor sophistry confound. If Christianity be an imposture, its success is the greatest miracle which the universe ever witnessed, and thus has been a miracle in attestation of a falsehood. Into such absurdities do men run who reject the truth. Since the primitive ages of Christian triumph, the Redeemer's kingdom has still continued to increase. The gospel has taken a northerly course, and nation after nation in Europe has embraced the religion of Jesus. A new world arose, as from the abyss, beyond the western ocean, where it had been hidden from ages and generations; and it arose to receive the doctrine of the cross. Nor has the extension of Messiah's kingdom yet reached its farthest point; it is still increasing even in our own day, as Africa, Greenland, Tahiti, and India can testify; and it is destined to increase till all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God. Age after age has caught the sound of the original prediction, and

made the boast its own; and one generation after another, as it looked to futurity, has returned in lengthened echo the Baptist's words, and joyfully exclaimed, "He must increase." It has become a kind of watchword to the church; its solace in adversity and its song in prosperity; an irrefragable truth on which to build its hope; a source of consolation amidst its deepest sorrows; and a directory to duty amidst every change and through every age.

The task assigned me in the interesting services of this day, is to exhibit a prospective view of the probable operations and successes of the missionary society. An able and interesting retrospect of its history was given by my much respected friend* in the morning. In the prosecution of my design, I remark, I. That the ultimate conversion of the world to Christ is matter of indubitable certainty. This great fact would appear probable even though we had no express assurance of it: the abolition of a dispensation restrictive and exclusive in its nature and provisions, and the establishment of another upon its ruins universal in its aspect and adapted in its doctrines, precepts, invitations, and institutes, to the whole family of man; the infinite benevolence of Jehovah, viewed in connection with his omnipotence and omniscience, and especially his manifested delight in bringing good out of evil; the sublimity of design, and grandeur of plan attaching to the system of mediation, as it centres in the cross of Christ; the power of truth, and the expansive energy of practical Christianity, would all lead us to hope that at some future time the world would be subjugated unto Christ. But that which reason, arguing from such pre-

* The Rev. John Griffin, of Portsea.

mises, would render probable, revelation has established as certain. Innumerable promises, written by the finger of God on the page of inspiration, but which I have no leisure now to quote, assure us, "that the glory of God shall be revealed, and all flesh see it together."

Not that the predictions of the prophets are the grounds of our obligations to missionary exertions; for had Jehovah maintained the most profound and awful silence on the future moral history of the world; if it were possible for a stern and rigid criticism to dissipate, by a sounder method of interpretation, all those lovely visions which, by our views of prophetic writ, we have spread in beautiful perspective over the dreary wilds of paganism, even then would not our conscience be released from a single obligation to abound in this work of the Lord; for, amidst this reserve of the oracle of inspiration, the loud and explicit voice of the moral law and of the apostolical commission would still be heard; and these constitute the grounds of our obligation to diffuse "the savour of the knowledge of Christ" in every place. I doubt not that many false views of Old Testament prophecies have obtained credit and currency: many persons, like the authors of these predictions, are still employed "in searching what, or what manner of time the spirit of Christ did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that shall follow," and are perhaps no nearer to this knowledge than the prophets themselves. Whatever obscurity, however, may rest upon the prediction, either as to fact or time; whatever ignorance or perplexity we may feel; whatever error we may indulge, the ground of our obligation is not touched; for as long as it is our duty to love God supremely, and our neighbour as ourselves,

and as long as the command of Christ, to preach the gospel to every creature, is unfulfilled, it is manifestly our duty to go forward in our missionary career; if in addition to this, the prophet's hand lift up the veil of futurity, to disclose a redeemed, regenerated world, and if his lyre give us, by anticipation, the song of holy and happy nations, it is not so much to teach us what is our duty, as to encourage us in the performance of it: it is a stimulus to exertion, but not the ground of obligation.

Let it not be thought that I undervalue this prophecy. I render daily thanks to God for offering to the eye of faith this vista into futurity, and for affording me such a source of consolation, afflicted as I am by the present sins and sorrows of the globe. It is when I stand upon the mount of prophecy, and overlooking the scenery immediately about me, direct my eye over the prospect of ineffable beauty stretching on every side to the horizon, that I feel conscious of my vast elevation above all the infidels and philosophers of every age and every nation. It is there that I can calculate with certainty the tendencies and results of human events: it is thence that, as I trace the windings of the stream of providence, I can perceive that, though sometimes apparently rolling backward upon its source, it is always in reality urged onward in its course by an invisible hand; it is there that I feel as if admitted to the secrets of heaven, the counsels of eternity, the plans of providence. Tell me, ye philosophic infidels, who sneer at revelation, as below the dignity of human reason, can your eye penetrate the gloom and see as far? What though the human mind be on the march of improvement, and ye so confidently boast of the perfectibility

of man on principles purely scientific, do not facts lead you to fear that this improvement may not always continue? Did not the bright star of Athens and of Rome set amidst the clouds of barbarism and ignorance, and can ye say, that the brighter star which now shines on Europe, will not do the same? But admitting that the light of science will not wane, will its progressive splendour be accompanied by an equal degree of virtue, or will the cultivation of the mind be followed, as in ancient times, with the debasement of the heart? Ah! ye cannot tell. Turning from the light of prophecy, ye plunge into thick darkness: a near and narrow horizon bounds your prospect and excludes futurity from your view. Thanks be unto God for "the revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass." It is not, indeed, for us to know the times and the seasons, which the Father hath put into his own power; but the ultimate result itself is indubitably certain.

II. This great moral revolution will be accomplished by the blessing of God on the ordinary methods of communicating Divine Truth. We are not authorised to look for any other interposition of omnipotent power than that which is granted in the effusion of the Holy Spirit upon the preaching and teaching of the gospel. The expectation of a renewed employment of miraculous agency, is unwarranted by the word of God; is founded on a misapprehension of the design of the supernatural power of the apostolic times, and is proved by past and present events, to be contrary to the arrangements of God for the final conversion of the world. Besides, if miracles were to be again restored, it would not be to supersede the ordinary methods of religious

instruction, but only to give them greater success; so that in either case there is an unquestionable rationality, and an obvious necessity, in our employing the usual means of disseminating the "truth as it is in Jesus."

III. Among the means that are to be employed for extending the reign of Christ, and the influence of Christianity in the world, missionary societies, or the associated energies of whole religious denominations, bear a high and distinguished place. I say among the means, for I do not contend that vast bodies of Christians, including the associated energies and resources of whole sections of the spiritual community, organised and marshalled in one grand and imposing array, are the exclusive methods by which the gospel is to be spread through the earth; for then I should not only limit the Holy One of Israel, but stand opposed to the facts on sacred record, which exhibit a scheme of less systematic and general combination, and of more simplicity of detail. It is highly probable that at some future time, in a more advanced state of religion, when believers shall feel more powerfully the influence of their own principles, and more fully understand their obligations to diffuse the savour of the knowledge of Christ; when there shall be more of the self-devotedness displayed by the first Christians and when zeal shall be less dependent on the adventitious means which are now found or thought to be necessary for awakening and sustaining it, that things will then revert to their original state, and churches as such, send out messengers from themselves, with the glad tidings of salvation to the heathen. It must I think be admitted that our churches have not yet taken that station, nor assumed that prominence, nor made those exertions which belong to them.

If we consult the records of sacred history we shall discover that the work of evangelising the world in the apostolic ages of Christianity, was carried on by the churches.* These associated companies of believers considered that one end of their public union was to "shine as lights of the world," and to illuminate the dark places of the earth: they never dreamt of such a thing, as that when they had given themselves to each other, provided a convenient place of assembling, elected their own pastors, and enjoyed with regularity the means of religious edification and comfort, that then they had arrived at the ultimate end and uttermost advantages of christian fellowship. The selfish religion of modern churches was not theirs: they said to each other, "we are the lights of the world, and we must not shut up the illumination within our own limits, but diffuse the beams of it abroad." If they heard of an opening for the preaching of the gospel, whether in their vicinity or at a distance, they immediately took steps to send a messenger of glad tidings either from themselves or others, to the people that were "perishing for lack of knowledge;" the proceedings of missionaries were regularly reported to them; they were required to receive and send forward missionaries passing to regions beyond them, and to support missionaries at their stations of labour, when it might be necessary to do so; and it was also expected that private members of churches should be deputed to accompany missionaries on their journeys to prepare the way for them, and otherwise to aid them. I apprehend that the loss of this

* Acts xi, 19–22; xiii, 1–5; xiv, 27; xv, 3; xvii, 10, 14, 15; xviii, 22, 26–7; xx, 4–6; 1 Cor. xvi, 5, 6, 10, 11; Phil. ix, 10–19; 1 Thess. i, 8.

principle, or at least its almost universal neglect by the churches in modern times, is one of the most prominent causes of their lamentable defection from the animation, zeal and devotedness of the primitive churches.

"O think, my brethren, of the animation and interest that would be communicated to our congregations, if they assembled, not merely as associated in worshipping God after the same form, listening to the same preacher, and partaking of the same bread and wine in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, but as associating together for the purpose of prosecuting the same grand and arduous enterprise, the evangelization of the world; if they were mission establishments, in which the exhortations of the minister, besides bearing upon the private lives of his hearers, were directed to animate and interest them in some great and important missionary operation; and if, in partaking together of the sacred emblems of the body and blood of their crucified Lord, they felt themselves to be offering a solemn pledge to God and to one another, to be faithful and stedfast in the prosecution of their work, and be ready to devote their time or their property to any department of duty in which he might see fit to employ them. True it is, that by sitting down to the supper of the Lord, Christians in effect make such a profession of devotedness to him. True it is, that faithful ministers in addressing them, tell them that they are but stewards in regard to all that they possess, and that they are bound to employ the whole in conformity with the directions of him who has entrusted them with his goods, as persons that must render an account: but how little is intended by such professions, how little meaning is attached to them, is too lamentably obvious in the extreme backwardness

of many who make them to do or to give anything for promoting the advancement of the christian cause. I conceive that the most direct and most effective means of reviving a spirit of zealous and animated piety among a people who have in any degree fallen into deadness and formality, is to endeavour to interest and engage them in some great christian enterprise. When a christian church becomes satisfied with attending to its own internal edification, and uses no endeavours to disseminate its principles, so far from really providing well for its own spiritual interest, it sinks itself into a lifeless attendance on outward forms. The history of such a people may be summed up in a few transitions, that bring them ultimately to a total defection from Christ."*

The state of things here described belongs perhaps to another and a purer age, rather than to ours, to which missionary societies are at present eminently adapted. These alone can bring into operation, by bringing into union, the scattered energies and diffused resources of the friends of missions. Such societies, where the sphere of their labours is either in colonial countries or in civilized foreign kingdoms, allay the jealous fears of authority, and procure an easier entrance for their agents, by becoming, to a certain extent at least, responsible for the character and designs of their missionaries. Such societies awaken attention at home, attract assistance, and afford a channel into which those little streams of liberality and zeal may be poured, which are too diminutive of themselves to reach the parched places

* These extracts are from an admirable Sermon, preached by the Rev. James Carlile, before the General Synod of Ulster, of which he was Moderator.

of the earth, but which may thus swell the current of public benevolence, and be borne along in its majestic course to the very remotest scenes of missionary enterprise. Public and organized societies, then, we must have; but they should be purified as much as possible from all secularity, and conducted as much as possible in simplicity and godly sincerity, without the admixture in their councils and their schemes of that fleshly wisdom which guides the affairs of this world. They should be divested of earthly pomp, guided by men of piety, and most cautiously preserved from that self-importance and self-dependence, which all imposing organisations of numbers, wealth, and influence, are apt to produce. It is a possible case, for a subtle and secret idolatry to be rising up at home, while the more gross and tangible forms of this great abomination are falling to the ground in distant countries; and for those very institutions to become idols in Britain, which are demolishing the false gods in India and Tahiti. To preserve the existence of our Society we must keep it in its right place, and to perpetuate its utility, we must maintain its humility. Instrumentality becomes aspiring in proportion to its magnitude and success: pride grows not amidst insignificance and disappointment, but is that spiritual wickedness in high places, which flourishes in publicity, and like the ivy, scorns the sapling, to entwine itself around the mighty lord of the forest, till at length it kills the tree which raised it from the earth. God has done great things for us, and by us, whereof we are glad: let us be grateful but not proud, then shall we see greater things yet: but if we are destitute of that love "which vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up," the dissolution of our Society is at hand, and this shall be the inscrip-

tion of her monument "She was an instrument, wished to be more, and became nothing."

IV. Judging from the past achievements and the present prospects of the London Missionary Society, we may hope, that no small share of the instrumentality to be employed in bringing about the conversion of the world will be allotted to that important Institution.

The high honour of this instrumentality, I doubt not, will be shared by all denominations of Christians. I pity and despise the covetous sectarianism, the grasping selfish bigotry of those who would monopolise for their own denomination the undivided glory of subjugating the world to Christ; who would entwine the laurel branch round the brows of their own party, and grudge even a leaf to others. Perish for ever such sordid ambition, such jealous and envious zeal! I delight in the thought that the happiness of making known our Lord Jesus will be divided between all who love him in sincerity. I look round with heartfelt congratulations to the Church, the Baptist, the Methodist, the Moravian, the Scottish Missionary Societies, and rejoice to see them gathering immortal honours in the field of conflict with the powers of darkness. Success to you, brethren; I bless you in the name of the Lord. But my duty this evening is specific, and that duty is to exhibit the prospects of the London Missionary Society.

I. I shall present these prospects as connected with, and arising from the society's operations abroad. The missions in South Africa, amounting to seven stations within the boundaries of the colony, and eight beyond; occupied by twenty-seven missionaries exclusive of their wives, (several of these missionaries being native teachers,) afford a prospect of no very confined extent

in that hitherto desolate quarter of the globe. The capability of the Hottentot mind, (never doubted except by those who, wishing to find an excuse for treating them as brutes, attempted to believe that they were such,) being now proved by their reception of Christianity, and advancement in civilisation, all discouragements to their evangelisation formerly thrown in the way from this quarter are now removed, and we have not to demonstrate the possibility of their conversion. Christianity is in Africa, and taking a northerly course from the Cape of Good Hope, followed by the Bible, the plough, and the printing press, is leaving the traces of her march, in peaceful villages, surrounded by gardens and corn-fields; villages within which may be heard the sound of the church-going bell, the songs of Zion, and the hum of schools on the Sabbath; and the stroke of the axe, the hammer, and the flail on the days of the week. Our missionary stations have drawn the eye of delighted surprise upon them from the neighbouring tribes, who begin to look upon the residence of a missionary as a benefit to a community, and an era in its history: and the language of most of them is, "send us a missionary." Their character for disinterested benevolence, and their reputation for knowledge in the common arts of life, make these messengers of the true God everywhere coveted by the sable and barbarous children of Ham. It is remarkable that the attention of Englishmen has been of late years drawn in a very particular manner, to the interior of Africa; and perhaps more journeys of discovery have been undertaken thither, than to any other part of the world: but in all probability, it is reserved for missionaries, rather than for mere travellers, to lift up the veil which has hitherto

covered that immense continent, and bringing to light the nations that lie buried in those unknown regions, to fill up the blank spaces upon our maps, and complete the geography of the torrid zone.

The neighbouring island of Madagascar presents an immense field almost white unto the harvest, and inviting the reaper to thrust in his sickle. Possessing a population of nearly four million souls, who though they are heathens, possess neither idols nor priests, and who, therefore, have not those strong prejudices against Christianity which are generated by systematic idolatry; governed by an intelligent, patriotic king, fond of his British alliance, anxious for the improvement of his country, coveting our arts, and willing to patronise our religion for their sakes; this important island seems stretching out its hands to the society, and should be occupied by a body of intelligent, judicious, peaceable missionaries, versed not only in religion, which is, of course, the chief thing, but in the principles of jurisprudence, the theories of organised society, and the elements of general learning: men whom a shrewd, inquisitive prince, will look up to with respect, and listen to with deference. Madagascar will receive, I hope, the most deliberate attention of the directors, as presenting one of the fairest and most hopeful of our prospects. Its vicinity to the Mauritius, to continental Africa, and to the western coast of India, all combine to heighten its consequence.

Leaving Africa, and proceeding onward to the Pacific, we reach the most astonishing scene of christian triumph which has been exhibited in modern times. The whole history of these missions is extraordinary. A century ago it was scarcely known that such islands were in

existence as those that are now christianised. Little did our illustrious and unfortunate navigator, Captain Cook, imagine, when he steered his vessel to Tahiti, and dropped his anchor in Matavai Bay, who sent him thither, or for what purposes he went. The secret, however, is now divulged; and proves how closely connected are the transactions of history with the spread of religion, and how tributary are the achievements of travellers and navigators, warriors and statesmen, to the plans of providence for the salvation of the world. Captain Cook's glowing description of Tahiti, no doubt, produced the enthusiasm of Dr. Haweis, and his enthusiasm communicated itself to the christian world. For a long season, however, we reaped nothing but disappointment from our efforts. The mission to Tahiti for awhile was reckoned among the visionary extravaganees of the age; another South Sea bubble raised from the Pacific to be floated to England, and there to burst, to the ultimate confusion of the religious part of the nation, as the first had done for the trading community. Every witling who could not frame an argument against the cause of missions, in default of logic, could mention a fact, and the mere mention of Tahiti was thought to be conclusive. It was the taunt of our enemies and, in many cases, the dismay and confusion of our friends. But God has arisen to vindicate his own cause, to turn the scorner's triumph into confusion, to prove that there is nothing too hard for Omnipotence, to reward the patience of his servants in this instance of once almost hopeless enterprise, and to encourage it in all others. God is saying to the south, keep not back: his way is in the sea, and the cloud of his glory rests on that mighty world of waters. The conversion of the

savage nations seems to have commenced where many sciolists would have told us it could never reach. It is, however, with the future that I have to do. But who, without the prophet's prescience, can tell what the future shall produce? It is altogether probable that everything which has taken place in the Pacific is only the commencement of a still mightier work yet to be accomplished; a mere affair of outposts, preparatory to the defeat of the army. I admit that something is to be ascribed in the downfall of idolatry in those islands to the force of example, and not all to the power of conviction; but then, what an example, and how great the importance that it should be imitated! I believe it is thus that idolatry, to a considerable extent, will be demolished through the world. A perception of its folly and cruelty will prepare multitudes to cast away the accursed thing, before the evidence of the divine authority of the Gospel is perceived, or its influence savingly felt. It is this imitation of example that will carry the work from island to island, till the whole multitude of the isles shall be converted unto God. The religion of idolators is a religion of fear, and when once it has been proved that the cruel deities of one people can be abandoned without ill consequence to their rebellious and indignant votaries, the followers of other sanguinary gods will be emboldened to follow their conduct.

Let any one take a map of the world and look at the situations of Hawaii and Tahiti, and then limit if he can the work of conversion which is going on in the islands of the Pacific. Nearly the whole group of the Society Isles have embraced the gospel; and so have many of the Hervey Isles; the Friendly Isles and the Marquesas being in the vicinity, may be expected

soon to follow; to the south west we find the New Hebrides and Caledonia; then comes New Holland, that vast Insular Continent; and to the north west we find an Archipelago containing unnumbered islands, many of them large enough to form a kingdom, stretching away to China and Japan: and is it improbable that in process of time the lights kindled in Tahiti and Hawaii will throw their illumination over this vast expanse? I admit that the scenes of christian triumph in the Pacific are insular; but then how numerous are the islands, and how comparatively easy the transit from one to another. The religion of the Tahitians, under the instruction of the missionaries, has shown one feature of primitive christianity in a zeal for proselyting: they know nothing of a religion which does not diffuse itself; they have commenced at that very point which we have but lately reached. Whole islands have already been converted to nominal religion at least, by native missionaries only. And then, the Hawaiians have made considerable progress in navigation, and in their trading voyages have pushed almost to the extremities of the Northern Pacific; and can we imagine that Christianity, when they shall generally embrace it, will benumb their energy, or extinguish their spirit of enterprise? Let the work in the South Sea be judiciously and vigorously followed up, and the time may come when its influence will be felt from Behring's Straits in the North to New Zealand in the South; from China in the West to Mexico in the East.*

* The author here appended a note urging the plan of a missionary ship, which was first carried out by his friend Williams, and was afterwards followed by the Wesleyan missionaries, next by Bishop Selwyn, and finally by the Romanist missionaries.

East India presents to the friends of Christianity a boundless and promising field of missionary enterprise. "This is evidently the city set upon a hill, whence truth will issue to the remotest East; and this wonderful country is still more wonderfully placed at the disposal of Britain:" and so placed by Divine Providence, to receive not merely our commerce and our laws, but also our religion. Nothing that we have yet done in this quarter of the earth, can even distantly approach the truly wonderful successes of our Baptist brethren at Serampore; and, therefore, our prospects among the Hindoos are far more circumscribed than theirs. Instead of regarding their progress with envy, we view it with a feeling of gratitude and delight, as pure and intense as their own. Our missions, however, promise more fruit for the future than they have yielded in the past. We have stations at Surat, on the western coast of Hindostan; and at Calcutta, Chitlah, Benares, Madras, Berhampore, Chinsurah, Vizagapatam, Cuddapah, Bellary, Belgaum, Bangalore, and Travancore, on the eastern coast: at all of which laborious and faithful missionaries are employed in translating and circulating the scriptures and religious tracts, besides public preaching, private teaching, and extended evangelising itinerancy into the interior of the country. We have lately received intelligence of a most gratifying nature from one of our missionaries in the Presidency of Bengal, giving us an account of the renunciation by its worshippers of Sheeb, a national idol, whose obscene orgies are a source of infinite pollution to the female population of India. Household gods have often been surrendered, but it is doubted whether a national object of homage has ever

before been abandoned by its votaries, and its temple, as in this case, converted into a place of christian worship. This triumph is of immense consequence on account of the influence it may have in the way of example. It seems to me that only a few instances of this kind are wanted to produce a most powerful impression on the minds of the Hindoos. Two or three more defeats of this nature would operate like a stroke of thunder on the colossal fabric of eastern idolatry, and shake to its very centre the empire of the powers of darkness in that quarter of the world. Almost every account which comes from our missionaries informs us that, though conversions are not numerous, enquiry is excited. The idolaters in many cases ridicule their deities, and admit their depravity: and where an object of worship has not the esteem of its votaries, nothing is wanting but example, to induce them to abandon it. Education, which is now so extending itself in India, is perhaps our most promising hope in that division of the earth. Education and the press are the two great means, which in connection with preaching, will bring about the moral revolution of the world. If the British government could be induced to take under their control and direction the education of Hindostan in the elements of general knowledge, what a step would be taken towards its emancipation from the thraldom of idolatry; "and an empire more absolute than any which has tyrannised over the body, might be seated in the affections, and established in the opinions and literature of a hundred millions of subjects. The fiction of the Brahmin might be realised, and the White Islands of the West become more sacred to the Hindoos than

Meru, and the waves that wash them, than the waters of the Ganges."* As there is no prospect of national co-operation, let Missionary Societies give to the cause of education all the support its importance demands. There are in India more than ten millions of human beings, of an age capable of receiving education, of whom, perhaps, not more than twenty thousand are deriving its benefits from christian missionaries. Our energies in the cause of education should be doubled, yea, quadrupled: let us educate not only scholars, but masters: let us push the system to the uttermost: we cannot attach too much importance to it. It is laying the axe to the root of the tree, and crushing the serpent in the egg. The people are anxious to be taught, they are thirsting for information, and are willing to send even their female children to our schools, a thing till lately unknown and unthought of. Education will prepare the Hindoos to read the Scriptures and the tracts which we are putting into circulation; and it will abate their prejudices against Christianity, by producing a kindly feeling towards the Christians, who have bestowed upon them the benefits of knowledge.

Malacca, with its printing establishment and Anglo-Chinese College, presents to my eye one of the most promising of our stations. I augur much from the determination of our society to press the aid of literature into our cause. There is much learning, at least what is esteemed such, prevailing throughout the East; and if idolatry leans for its support upon literature, by literature, as one of the weapons of religion, it must be attacked. It is from such a station as this we may hope

* "Hints on Missions," by James Douglas, Esq., to whom I am indebted for several remarks.

gradually to approach the empire of China; whose jealous and despotic government, though it may shut out Europeans from its own country, cannot prevent its subjects from wandering to other lands; nor suppress that new nation of Chinese which is rising up in the Indian Islands. The station and its college, if well supported, and not meddled with by a near-sighted policy, which can discern no distant prospect, however extensive, may be the means of accelerating the introduction of the gospel into the 'Celestial Empire.' "It is in vain for the imperial edicts to prevent the entrance of foreigners or foreign books. If the descendants of the Chinese in these islands are once converted, they will easily evade the police, however strict, and their opinions must spread, if there be but sufficient conviction on the part of the holders.

Dr. Morrison's labours and influence are immensely important; his opinions should be listened to with the greatest deference; his achievements appreciated at the highest rate; and his exertions supported with the liberality which their vast moment demands. We must beware of suffering our judgments to be betrayed into the expectations of immediate and extensive success in the East. There is a wide difference between the condition of the Hottentots and that of the Hindoos, between Tahiti and China. In the latter cases, the strongholds of Satan must be approached and attacked by the slow advances of a regular siege. It may be long before even the outworks capitulate, but when they do, the conquest of the city will probably be speedy. If in a hundred years Christianity shall have gained a lodgement in Canton, we may continue, with animated hope, the battle of the Lord: and consider this an immense

prize to reward the conflicts of a century. If I pass over in silence the prospects connected with our other missions, it is because I think them of little promise.

2. The prospects of the society may be viewed next as connected with the work which it has accomplished in Christian countries, especially in Britain and in America. The Missionary Society has had a greater influence, perhaps, than any other institution in reviving a feature of primitive Christianity, lost for ages, by making the Church once more feel and acknowledge that the genius of the Gospel is essentially and unalterably a spirit of proselytism. It has caused English Christians publicly to recognise that it is as much their duty to support the cause of missions abroad, as the ministry of the word at home. It has not only written down this sentiment in its own reports, but has caused it to be introduced among the articles of our creed. The whole religious public is converted by the operation of this conviction into one vast missionary society, of which every congregation is an auxiliary, and almost every family a branch. A spirit of universal philanthropy is abroad, which, in the holiness and loftiness of its ambition, soars above the boundaries of oceans and continents, lays down the map of the globe as the ground plan of its operations, and aims at universal conquest and perpetual dominion. Neither the reformation of Christendom, nor the restoration of the Jews, nor the conversion of Mahometans, nor the salvation of Pagans, is exclusively the object of its pursuit: but its cry is, "the world, the whole world for Christ." England has sent the sound to Scotland: England and Scotland have sent it to America; and on both sides of the Atlantic the shout is heard,

"the world for Christ." It has been heard not only in different countries, but has been uttered by most denominations of professing Christians. Episcopalians, Baptists, Methodists, and Independents, have each their society; and "the world for Christ" is the watchword of the age. Now this universal recognition of missionary principles is a more pleasing omen in my view than any one distinct organisation of human energies, or than all of them together. It is the hope of futurity, the most sure and certain indication of the glorious events which are to arise. It is not only the best pledge of the continuance of the missionary societies, but it is the very soul of the missionary cause itself, and would, if all the institutions in existence were to perish, ensure for them a speedy and glorious resurrection in some more pure and energetic form. Let the board of directors in Austin Friars be scattered; let the mission house become again a house of merchandise; let the society be dissolved; and let this be the case with every similar institution; and all this is possible, for we are not to make the purposes of God depend for their accomplishment on any system of human invention: but even in that case, the missionary work would not be undone, nor its prospects beclouded, nor its career terminated, for it would live and flourish, and increase, in the great principle which it has revived in the church, "that the conversion of the world is the duty of believers." Something of human agency may disappear, as regards its present organisation, but this principle is immortal. The first success of Christianity appears to have been owing, independently of miracles, to the general diffusion of a missionary spirit, and the revival of the same spirit, will, in all human probability, be attended with

the same result. Even should the present ardour die away for a season, it must accomplish wonders while it lasts.

3. Contemplate the prospect of the society as connected with, and arising from the present aspect of the times, and the tendency of passing events. There are ages when human affairs seem stagnant, when society is quiescent, and the mind of man lies like leviathan asleep upon the ocean in a dead calm: there are other ages when the community retrogrades, barbarism encroaches on civilisation, the sun of science sinks into eclipse, and the human race slowly and silently go back to ignorance. Altogether contrary is the character of the age in which we live; events have of late years multiplied and changed with a rapidity, that looks as if we were approaching the development of some vast plot. The dark and frowning fabrics of tyranny are tottering on their bases, convulsed by the principles of liberty, which like the subterranean fires of the earthquake, are rendered ultimately more furious and destructive, by the superincumbent weight which long resists their mighty force: great principles are in circulation, from which, when purified from certain political extravagances and infidel corruptions, civil and religious freedom shall finally emerge. Discovery is laying open new countries and introducing strange nations to the knowledge of the world; conquest is adding new territory to the British Empire; art is multiplying its inventions, and science its discoveries; education is facilitating and expediting the process of communicating ideas; navigation has become more adventurous, more speedy, and more safe. In short, society is not only proceeding with rapid strides across the plain, but is bounding from eminence

to eminence. The improvement of mankind is talked of and expected; there is a general looking out among thinking people for some great intellectual and moral era: all eyes are turned to the horizon which glows every moment with the brighter hues of some yet invisible luminary; but, ah! how little do the philosophers and the great ones of the earth, who are coming to his light, and flocking to the brightness of his rising, imagine that this approaching orb of splendour, is that "Sun of Righteousness," which they have despised as a meteor of superstition. Mistaken men! ye are looking for a millennium of science in which mankind shall be delivered from the thraldom of religion; how will ye be disappointed to find yourselves encompassed by the holy radiance of a millennium of religion, which science itself shall help to introduce! Ye are preparing to sing the pœans to your Apollo; how will ye be mortified to hear the chorus of praise ascend from a regenerated world to the crucified Nazarene! Ye are preparing for the jubilee of omnipotent philosophy; how will ye be astonished to find that even philosophy, having purified herself in the laver of regeneration, shall join to celebrate the triumphs of Christianity. It is our joy as believers in revelation, to know that all arts and sciences, all conquests and discoveries, are tributary to religion, and preparing the world for its universal diffusion. There is one great, and wise, and good, and omnipresent Being, who is ever gathering up into his holy and beneficent schemes, all the separate influences of human events, and making everything tributary to his gracious purposes in reference to the moral improvement of mankind. The Missionary Society, founded on the noble, generous, and elevated principles of revelation, has, with

other kindred institutions, everything to hope for from the general improvement of mankind. Christianity has no alliance with ignorance, no sympathy with tyranny, no fondness for slavery: it is great and the parent of greatness; it is good and the fountain of goodness. It does not stand aloof and apart from the improvements of the age, sullen and scowling, like a tenantless building sinking to decay, amidst surrounding bloom and verdure; but rises, like a noble and well inhabited mansion, the promoter and enjoyer of all the improvements which are going on its vicinity. All the great things in which the moderns excel the ancients; the inductive philosophy, a literature extended and perpetuated by printing, the mechanical arts, and universal education, are received by religion into the closest alliance, and employed by her in the prosecution of her great and glorious designs; they now help her triumphs, and shall hereafter acknowledge it to have been their highest honour, to have aided her progress to universal dominion.

4. We may view the prospects of the society, in connexion with the existence, and as affected by the prosperity, of other similar institutions. Had our society existed alone, its prospects had been far less encouraging than they are. Its existence would have been less indicative of an effusion of the Holy Spirit, and its permanence a matter of greater doubt. A solitary tree in the wilderness is in greater danger of being bent from its symmetry, or blown down by the tempest, than the oaks of the forest, which both assist each other's growth, and promote each other's safety; so also, a single fire may sooner languish, than neighbouring flames, which increase each other's heat, and

brighten each other's blaze. Thus the various missionary societies, instead of being rivals to injure, are auxiliaries to help each other. "Each brings into circulation the treasure of wisdom and piety, as well as influence, which is to be found in its particular circle, and they may all profit by the councils, plans, success, or failures of every one." The discouragement of one is cheered by the sympathy of the rest, and the success of each is a stimulus to the other. If the Dissenting institutions were to languish, they would be roused by the energy of the Church society; while if the latter were to grow lukewarm, it would borrow warmth from its nonconformist neighbours: if England were to become negligent, Scotland would quicken its diligence; and if the zeal of both England and Scotland were to become dim, it would be rekindled by a coal from the altar of America. I consider, therefore, that the prospect of our continuance and success, is brightened by the existence of other similar institutions. And then the rise and progress of the British and Foreign Bible Society is another most auspicious sign. Rising, as I doubt not she will, more pure and more healthy from the troubled waters in which she has been lately plunged, and in which she has washed from her hands and her feet some earthly adhesions, which were spots upon her beauty, and impediments to her usefulness; she is destined, I believe, to remain till the millennium shall render her efforts no longer necessary. She may be frowned upon from the north; but having, in the spirit of conciliation and concession, relinquished the objectionable part of her procedure, she will never be abandoned by her friends in the south; and this institution will help to perpetuate the existence, and to extend the usefulness,

of missionary societies, inasmuch as it must in many cases be preceded by them, and is ever ready with its funds to aid that part of their labours which consists in translating the Holy Scriptures. British zeal will never abandon the Bible Society, and this institution will require and assist those of a missionary character. In all these particulars, the prospects of our institution appear encouraging. There is much to enliven hope and to stimulate exertion. We cannot look into futurity, nor declare the things that shall be; but we trust that a long career of usefulness is destined to a society, under the smiles of which some of us were born, and in the support of which many of us have grown old; which is dear to us as a means of blessing the world, and which we have found to be a blessing to ourselves. Still, however, we must so far separate the cause of missions from every missionary society in existence, as to rejoice in the confidence of faith, that if amidst the vicissitudes of time, and the changes of earth, the present organisation should decline even to dissolution, the cause itself will still live and flourish, till all the ends of the world shall see the salvation of God.

I shall now consider the means which are necessary to follow up our success, and realise our prospects; and as a general direction, I remark, that our plans must combine as much as possible of christian simplicity, with judicious adaptation to the end to be accomplished. If the great object which we seek is to be brought about by means, "a spirit of judgment" should pervade our whole system. But I will descend to particulars.

1. Let us be anxious and careful to select, from time to time, an intelligent, active, pious body of directors. No community, civil or sacred, can go on well, if the

executive department be far behind the legislative. It must be obvious to every one who thinks for a moment, that the difficulties and perplexities of all missionary societies must keep pace with their successes, at least in uncivilised countries: just as a general finds it far easier to beat the enemy in the field, than to regulate the affairs of the conquered provinces. Both in South Africa and Tahiti, questions have already arisen, and will still arise, of an intricate and complicated nature, the solution of which will require not merely zealous hearts, but sound and discreet minds. We should be careful, therefore, in the selection of the men to whom these difficult and important affairs are entrusted. None should be chosen out of compliment to wealth or rank. Neither rich nor reverend imbecility will do anything for us but give us names, instead of directors. A dozen highly gifted intellects will be far more efficient than a hundred others, barely coming up to mediocrity. When any one has accepted the election of the society, and consented to become a director, let him consider it to be a matter of most solemn obligation to discharge, with conscientious diligence, the duties of his office. He is elected, whether he thinks so or not, to one of the most important, and responsible, and arduous stations in the universe; for the moral destinies of the globe, the well being of nations now existing, and of generations yet to come, and the eternal interests of innumerable millions of immortal souls, may be affected by the manner in which he discharges his obligations. For such a situation he should qualify himself by an intense interest in the cause of missions, by reading and studying everything that bears upon the object; and his attendance at the periodical meetings, either of the

general board, or of the particular sub-committee to which he may belong, should be as constant and punctual as his appearance at the house of God. The directors should be most rigidly economical in the expenditure of the funds committed to their discretion. That which is contributed at so great sacrifice, and collected with so much labour, should be spent with the greatest care. Let them spend the money well, and they will never want money to spend. All unnecessary expenditure in printing, travelling, and salaries, should be most solicitously kept down. Men are jealous of the appropriation of their property, and a lavish and indiscreet application of the funds of any society, is sure, at one time or other, to bring on a dangerous convulsion, or a ruinous secession. The directors should continue to conduct all their affairs in the greatest simplicity, and with the most ingenuous frankness, without studied concealments or mysterious reserve. Confidence is reciprocal; and to be trusted by another, we should trust in him. Public confidence, when once shaken, requires a long time to settle again. Hitherto the public have had no reason to complain, and I do not think they ever will.

2. Let us continue to attach much importance to the education of our missionaries, and endeavour to raise still higher the literary character of our institution. It is no part of our creed, that ignorance is a qualification for a missionary, and learning an impediment to his usefulness. The gift of tongues is gone, and grammars and lexicons supply its place. The first work, assuredly, of a missionary, is purely literary; and so is much of his subsequent employment. The chief human instrument of the Old Testament dispensation, and the

most successful one under the New, were both learned men. God has therefore shown no contempt of literature; nor should we. If even an expositor of the Scriptures ought not to be ignorant of the original languages in which they were written, of what consequence is it that a translator of them should be well versed in the sacred tongues. He who makes a bad translation of the Bible, pollutes the water of life at the fountain. I do not mean to affirm that every missionary should be a profound linguist; but certainly all who engage in the work of translating the Word of God, should be respectable scholars, have a taste for varied literature, and an aptness to acquire it. There are, I admit, stations where science is of more consequence than literature, and where artizans are more needed than verbal critics; but for the East we certainly want learned men, and philosophical men; men who, while pursuing the great work of converting the heathen, shall command the respect of Christendom, by the union of knowledge with piety and zeal. The names of Martyn, and Carey, and Marshman, and Morrison, have resounded through Europe and Asia, and prevented the reproach which many were anxious to bring on the cause, that missionaries are only ignorant fanatics, unworthy of the attention or sympathy of men of intelligence. The Popish Propaganda Society had sagacity enough to perceive, that superior learning and science will always command respect; and, by these means, the Jesuits have done wonders in different ages and countries of the world. They availed themselves of modern science, supplied the want of miracles by the attainments of superior knowledge and art, and set an example in this particular, which Protestants would do well to imitate. Religion,

before men are enlightened enough to regard her for her own excellence, often receives respect on account of the learning and science with which she may be seen in company. The education of our missionaries should be appropriate to the station for which they are intended. Their destination should be fixed as soon as the taste, tendency, and capacity of their minds can be ascertained; and their studies from that time should receive an appropriate direction. Since it has pleased the All-wise Disposer of human events to remove by death the late venerable president of our missionary college, we should feel thankful that he has provided another, so competent to be his successor; a man whose well-known attainments and correct principles in the department of biblical literature, eminently qualify him to be at the head of an institution of which this is the principal pursuit, and whose long and extended missionary travels no less fit him to direct the views and form the character of missionary students. The appointment of Dr. Henderson to this office is, I believe, matter of satisfaction to the friends of the society in general. May God grant him health and divine assistance to discharge, with comfort and success, the duties of his very important and arduous station, that his name may be mentioned with no less honour and esteem than that of his truly great and illustrious predecessor.

May it be ordained by God, that as Hoxton College has long proved a fountain of blessings to the churches in Britain, it may now, under its extended appropriation as a missionary seminary, send forth its healing streams to the ends of the earth, and henceforth be mentioned with as much gratitude and delight abroad as it is at home. If what is done on earth be known in heaven,

how naturally may we conceive that the departed spirits of the beloved Hooper, and the venerable Simpson, after hovering with deep attention over the interesting solemnities which attended the opening of the splendid institution at Highbury, have waited with a kind of holy impatience to witness this re-consecration of the scenes of their useful labours, and are now perhaps rejoicing in spirit with us, that a habitation, every room of which has been hallowed by innumerable prayers, is still to be employed as a school of the prophets, and to bear the inscription, "Holiness to the Lord."

3. Our plans for the future should be conducted upon the principle of concentration, rather than that of extension and expansion. I trust we shall be preserved from the ambition, which in aiming at too much, loses all. The conversion of the whole world is that which every missionary society should seek as its ultimate object, but it should not seek it by attempting the whole at once. Organised societies become inefficient when they become unwieldy. Everything then becomes complicated, no one separate object receives its due attention, and all is only half done. The Islands of the Pacific, South Africa, Madagascar, the East Indies, and China, present a field vast enough to employ the resources, and satisfy the ambition of any one society. Let us rather strengthen old missions, than form new ones. Let us make no new experiments, whatever temptations are thrown in our way. Let us, in India especially, adopt the principle of central stations, from which all our lines of operation shall radiate. By neglecting this, it appears to me, that we have done less than might have been otherwise accomplished in that quarter of the world.

4. Let it be a great object with us, to render our missions self-supporting, and self-propagating. The spread of the gospel must not always continue to depend on the country from which it originally goes forth. This was not the way in which Christianity was diffused in the first ages; nor is it the way in which it must be diffused now. The societies that were raised up by the preaching of the apostles and others who went forth from Jerusalem, were weaned from the mother church almost as soon as they were born. How limited would have been the conquests of religion if it had depended for its progress upon the veterans from Judea, instead of the warriors which it raised up in its victorious career. It is perfectly obvious to every thinking mind, that the only work to be done by foreigners is to introduce the gospel into a country, and then to send it forward by the hands of native converts. We must send out seed corn for the first harvest, and then expect that this first harvest should furnish the seed for future ones. Europeans cannot endure the scorching heat of tropical climates. Already the records of our society form a missionary martyrology; and must we go on for ever to swell this noble army of martyrs? No. We must look to converted natives, to whom those torrid regions are their native soil, and who can endure those pestilential heats. Natives only can bear the climate: natives best know the customs of the people, and how to attack their prejudices and opinions; natives only can bring to perfection the translation of the Scripture, by rendering its phrases in the idioms of their own tongues and excluding those of foreigners; natives only can give to preaching all its effect, by selecting those words which are the most appropriate symbols of the thoughts

passing in the mind, and by breathing forth their feelings in those tones which are most calculated to awaken in the bosom of the hearer a faithful echo of the sentiments spoken from the heart of the preacher. And then what a saving in expense will this ensure. Native teachers will easily be supported, without our aid: they will wear the same clothing, and eat the same food as their countrymen; and their carnal things will be furnished them, as they should be, according to the apostolical injunction, by the men to whom they have imparted their spiritual things! Almost every convert we make, at least for a considerable time to come, we should endeavour to make a preacher, if indeed, in addition to his piety, he has the physical and intellectual requisites. For this purpose, missionaries capable of "fitting the saints for the work of the ministry," and superintending the studies of promising young converts should be sent out: and suitable seminaries should be established. This system has been commenced in India, in Tahiti, and in South Africa, and in proportion as it prevails, do I anticipate the speedy increase of Messiah's kingdom.

5. Great attention must continue to be paid to the civilization of those converts whom Christianity found in a barbarous state. The senseless clamour against the folly of attempting to christianise before we civilize, is either dying away into the silence of confusion, or yielding to the recantation of conviction. The work has been done, and the opposers who would not be convinced by arguments, have been confounded by facts. The Esquimaux, the Hottentots, the Tahitians, all rise up to exclaim, "We ceased to be savages by becoming Christians." It is a fact, which I received from Mr.

Nott, the oldest of the original missionaries to Tahiti, that by no efforts whatever could they induce the natives to learn to read, before their conversion to Christianity, nor indeed to throw off one of their barbarous customs: but no sooner were they converted than they began at once to rise from the rank of savages: the grace of God, when it took possession of their hearts, planted in their nature all the germs of civilization; and at the first bound of their soul towards heaven under the new impulse of religion, they shook off and left behind them many of the most disgusting deformities of a barbarous state. Still, however, they are not yet what they might be and should be; and their improvement in civilization should be a great object with us. We must find out the best means of employing them; we must give them something to do; we must devise what will best suit them as staple articles of production; we must multiply their artificial wants; by education we must elevate their minds; by the arts we must refine their manners, and multiply their comforts; by stimulating their industry, we must keep them from indolence, and mischief, and vice.

My brethren in the ministry, I call upon you, and I include myself in the number, to lend all your energies and your influence to the great cause, which seeks, as its ultimate object, the moral renovation of a world. So far as means are concerned, the pulpit is the high altar on which the fire of missionary zeal is kept burning, ministers are especially appointed to watch and feed the sacred flame, and a punishment more severe than that which the laws of Rome awarded to the negligent Vestals is deserved by us, if we suffer the holy fire to languish. A minister who is destitute of concern for

the spread of the gospel through the world, and who has no sympathy with the spirit of the present times; whom neither the groans of creation, nor the call of the church, nor the command of Christ, can draw out from the circle of his own congregation, or from the retreats of his study, seems not to belong to the age in which he lives; he has come into the world a century too late, and exposes himself to the woe denounced on the selfish and indolent inhabitants of Meroz. The fathers of our cause have entered, or are entering upon their eternal repose. Haweis and Greatheed, Eyre and Hardcastle, Townsend and Bogue, are gone; only their illustrious names, their honoured sepulchres, and their glorious deeds remain. Other veterans, hoary with years, and rich in honours, are about to retire from the field. Burder and Waugh, Hill and Wilks, like ministering seraphs who have almost finished their embassy on earth, are turning their views to heaven, and pluming their wings for celestial flight. But let them not fear for the cause; we into whose hearts they have breathed their own spirit, are ready to swear before the shades of the mighty dead, and the venerated forms of the living, that we will never desert the institution which was dearer to them than their lives. Honoured and honourable men, who yet remain, let no anxious care disturb your last days; peace to your departing spirits; around you are those who, after watching your radiant passage to the skies, will seek for your mantle, imitate your example, and perpetuate your labours.

Friends of the society at large, learn your duties as connected with the anticipations of this day. The prospects which are before us, in order to be realized, must be sought in the use of all scriptural means. You

should seek for a greater measure of the spirit of faith, by which I mean an unshaken persuasion of the promises of God, respecting the universal extent of Messiah's kingdom. Your conviction must be neither founded upon, nor affected by, present and passing occurrences, but must be immovably based upon the truth of God. You must not feel as if you were trying an experiment, but must act in faith. It is of immense consequence also, that you should seek for a higher degree of spiritual and fervent piety in your own souls; and yet you are in danger of having less; for it is possible that we may be so occupied in cultivating the vineyards of others as to forget our own. One of the rewards which God confers on superior piety, is the honour of spreading religion in the world. The apostles were prepared for their work by being baptized with the Holy Spirit and with fire; and not till they were thus purified from the Jewish prejudices and the worldly ambition which they had formerly indulged, did our Lord render them successful as the reformers of mankind. If you would share their triumphs, you must be washed in the same fountain, and be made partakers of their holiness. You should also act more from the principles of an enlightened judgment, and depend less upon the means of external excitement. Why has it become necessary to depart from the simplicity of earlier times, and to employ all kinds of adventitious means to interest the religious public in the cause of christian missions? Why has the platform been raised as an auxiliary to the pulpit, the orator been called in to aid the preacher, and many voices been lifted up in succession, to do that which one, and the feeblest of them, should be sufficient to accomplish? Why has it been necessary, by the attraction

of mere human names, to invite attention to a cause which goes forth with the "name that is above every name;" and by oratory, and all "the pomp of circumstance," to give interest and impression to a scheme which bears the impress of heaven, the seal of truth, the sublimity of immortality? Why? Because our zeal was so soundly asleep as to need these awakening means: but shall we always need them? O, come the time when the silent power of conviction shall render many of the means now employed, and perhaps necessarily employed, no longer necessary: when the cause may be safely entrusted to the care of an enlightened judgment, and when the voice of conscience, speaking to the heart, shall draw forth a liberality in giving, compared with which, that produced by the voice of eloquence thundering on the ear, shall be but as the drops before the shower! Yes, there must be a still greater and more diffusive benevolence than there has ever yet been. There must be, not only a conviction, but a lively experience, that the chief pleasure connected with property is the employment of it in aiding the increase of the Redeemer's kingdom. The delights of ambition, of vanity, of pride, of luxury, will give place to the more elevated bliss arising from successful efforts to promote the moral improvement of mankind. O for something of that self-devotedness to which so much of the success of Christianity in its first ages was owing; that self-devotedness which doled not out its gifts in single and reluctant pounds, but which allowed not any man to call ought he had his own, while it was wanted for the cause of Christ! Rich professors of religion, I call upon you, not for your fives and your tens, but for your hundreds and your thousands. I call, did I say; no,

Jesus calls; it is He prefers the demand; it is He, pointing to a world lying in wickedness, who says, "Will ye, can ye, dare ye refuse anything for the conversion of this mass of sin and misery, to holiness and happiness." The obligations to liberality in the cause of missions, have pressed but lightly yet on the consciences of the rich. Let me remind them that there is One who has counted to the uttermost farthing what he has entrusted to their care; and who, to the uttermost farthing, in the day of judgment, will demand an account of all; of all they have spent, and of all they have hoarded; and fearful in many cases will be the shocking contrast between the sum accumulated, and the sum diffused: and as fearful in others, the contrast between the vast amount spent upon themselves, and the paltry total devoted to the cause of the Redeemer. Nor less necessary is it that the friends of missions should abound in prayer. And, notwithstanding what I have said on the subject of property, I am still more apprehensive of a want of prayer. When in some cases I have seen all kinds of contrivances to get money; when I have heard remarks, which sounded like the advice given by the oracle to Philip of Macedon, "fight with silver weapons, and you will conquer the world;" I have trembled for the cause. Money we must have, I admit, for the age of miracles is gone; but what would all the treasures yet buried in the mines of the west, added to that which is already in circulation, do in the conversion of idolaters without the grace of God? It is not for us to say by how small a sum, accompanied by his blessing, God could convert the world to himself, nor what immense sums, unattended by his blessing, would be lavished in vain. Our missionary schemes are con-

sidered by many in the present age, as the Gospel, which it is our object to diffuse, was in an earlier period, as the excess of foolishness; and when viewed apart from Omnipotence, they are entitled to this character, and to all the derision it could bring upon them. In any other view than as believers in the promise, and dependants upon the power of the Holy Spirit, we may be philanthropists in making the attempt to convert the world to Christ, but we are still the wildest enthusiasts if we expect to succeed. It is the grace of Jehovah, and that alone, vouchsafed in answer to earnest prayer, that will help us to realise the prospects of our glorious institution. It is the fervour of prayer more than of eloquence, which will ensure our success. Satan himself will allow us the latter, provided he can repress the former: the fervent supplications of a peasant or a child for the effusion of the Holy Spirit, excite greater alarm among the powers of darkness, than the most splendid coruscations of genius. There is a force and an influence in prayer that reach the extremities of the universe; it occasions a movement in heaven, brings down a blessing upon earth, and excites forebodings in hell. And when the church shall be universally seen in the attitude of prayer, then may the world lift up its head and rejoice, because the day of its redemption draweth nigh; for the world is given to Christ, and by Christ it shall be possessed. The councils of eternity have settled it; the page of prophecy has declared it; the cross of Calvary demands it; the prayers of the church implore it; and the zeal of the Lord God of Hosts shall perform it. Paganism, with all its obscenities and cruelties, its crimes and its curses, shall be swept from the face of the earth. The crescent of Mahomet shall be lost amidst

the blaze of the Sun of Righteousness. The tribes of Israel, weary of their wanderings, and collected again in the city of their fathers, shall submit to the Crucified One, as their Messiah and Prince. All corrupt establishments of Christendom shall be reformed and purified. The Bible shall be the only standard of faith and practice; Jehovah the only object of worship; Christ the only foundation of hope, from pole to pole. The population of the globe, freed from the checks of vice, of war, of barbarism, shall be incredibly multiplied, and everywhere be professedly christian. The distinction between the church and the world shall be abolished, for the world shall be the church; religious knowledge shall cover the earth, deep and expansive as the sea; the holiness of Christians, compared with that of the present age, shall be as the light of the sun to the light of the moon. Religion, ascending the throne, shall render "kings the nursing fathers of the church;" entering the council chamber and the senate, shall render ministers and senators patriotic, and shall establish legislation upon the basis of wisdom and equity. Wars shall cease; slavery shall terminate, and the air of liberty, civil and religious, be breathed by every rational creature under heaven; commerce shall be purified from deception, injustice, and oppression; and the merchandise of Tyre be holiness to the Lord. Social intercourse shall be regulated by the principles of evangelical piety. Philosophy shall give up its pride and its infidelity, and pursue its researches, in the spirit of modest, humble, pious enquiry. Literature shall be cleansed from its impurities; the arts be elevated and refined: in short, the universal reign of truth, of holiness, and of happiness,

shall be established, and earth shall require but short and easy transformation to become heaven itself.

How many centuries shall roll along before this consummation, so devoutly to be wished, shall arrive, it is not for me to say, for I presume not to understand the arithmetic of prophecy. We shall not live to witness it; but shall that check our joy? What, is this great world made for us, and are all the mighty wheels of Providence that roll kept in motion for us, and moved for our gratification? I rejoice for posterity. I exult for the generations that shall be. What, though we all die, and leave the world in confusion; what, though we see it in no other state than lying in wretchedness; what, though we labour and leave our work, for other men to enter into our labours; God shall be with them that succeed us; "a people which shall be created, shall praise the Lord." If we cannot have the joy of seeing, let us have the joy of believing. God will one day be honoured and Christ glorified throughout our world. At some time or other, He will "build up Zion, and appear in his glory," and will have the revenue of praise and honour which is to arise to him from this lower and lapsed part of his dominion. My brethren, rejoice for the world, be glad for posterity, congratulate the coming generations, and shout all hail, to the ages of futurity! "Sick of the crimes, weary of the follies, pained by the woes of man, console yourselves with the thought, that these crimes shall be done away, and these follies shall cease, and those woes which they draw in their train, shall be known no longer. Let your hearts leap for joy, for this earth shall yet smile like a renovated Eden, which seraphs will again delight to

visit; man shall again breathe the temper of angels, and bear the impress of God; this world, though now too like the suburbs of hell, in which Satan governs beings, many of them more like demons than men, shall be an image of heaven, in which Christ reigns supreme, and sheds forth nothing but benedictions." Such are the ultimate prospects of the missionary society, in the contemplation of which let every heart, in the strength of faith, and the fervour of prayer, exclaim, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus, come quickly."

PASTORAL CLAIMS STATED.

A SERMON,

ADDRESSED TO THE CHURCH ASSEMBLING IN LIVERY STREET, BIRMINGHAM,

NOVEMBER 16, 1827,

AT THE SETTLEMENT OF THE REV. J. MATHER.

Mr. Mather, at whose "settlement" or "recognition," the following discourse was delivered, had been previously at Bilston, and afterwards removed to a congregation near Clapton, where he died.

Livery Street Chapel has passed away from the denomination, and therefore is not mentioned in the Author's "Protestant Nonconformity in Birmingham," but having been at one time taken up by the Author, it seems to call for a short notice here. It was formerly an equestrian theatre, and was first occupied by the church formed among the friends of Mr. Brewer, who followed him from Carrs Lane, being the middle-aged and youthful part of the congregation. That church outgrew the chapel, and built and removed to Ebenezer. But a small minority chose to remain in Livery Street, (Mrs. Brewer and her family were among them,) and a new church arose, which had for its pastors, at intervals, Mr. Eagleton, Mr. Mather, and Mr. Binks. Eventually the congregation became too much reduced to support a minister, and as the poor had always shewn a greater willingness to attend in that chapel than any other belonging to the Independents in Birmingham, the Author and Mr. Glover, for three years defrayed the expense of worship there, the Author and Mr. East preaching there occasionally: but, at the end of that period the success of the effort was not sufficient to induce them to continue it, as the lease of the chapel was short, and was subject to a heavy debt, incurred, if the Editor remembers rightly, in Mr. Eagleton's time. It is due to the denomination thus to record that there were persons who did not allow this chapel to be lost without doing what they could to preserve it.

1 Thess. v, 12, 13.

And we beseech you, brethren, to know them that labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake: and be at peace among yourselves.

The part assigned to me in the services of this day is to state to you, my friends, the members of this church and congregation, the duties which you owe to the man whom you have now publicly acknowledged to be your pastor. Often as I have performed a similar task, I have always found it to be a delicate and a difficult one, inasmuch as in enforcing the claims of a brother minister, I feel as if I were urging my own; and cannot act up to my convictions in reference to him, without seeming to violate the laws of modesty in regard to myself. It is, however, some relief in this perplexity, to remember, that as your minister is not forced upon you, but is elected by your own choice, there can be no impropriety in the case of such a mutual and voluntary compact, if each party explicitly state what is expected from the other. With this consideration, I shall proceed to bring forward, in an unembarrassed manner, the claims which your pastor has upon you, and which appear to me to be all included or implied in the text.

I. You are to pay proper respect to the office which he sustains. Without pretending to an indelible character, which no change in our circumstances or conduct can destroy; or supposing that any personal sanctity, priestly usurpation, or exemption from the ordinary obligations of civil society, are connected with the pastoral functions, I affirm, that as the ministry is an office, an office instituted by God, an office of a very sacred nature, it does demand for those who bear it, from those on whose account it is borne, no small measure of respect. An unholy man has no scriptural right to the office, and a holy one is not only to be beloved as a brother, but is to be also respected as an office bearer. This is clearly laid down in the text. "You are to know those who are over you in the Lord;" and of course to know them as those who are in such a situation. "You are to esteem them very highly in love, for their work's sake," nor merely for their character's sake as good men, but for their office' sake as ministers of Christ. That many have disgraced their character, and caused the ministry to be blamed; that others have rendered it almost contemptible, by the insufferable arrogance, and the ridiculous airs of self-importance which they have assumed, is nothing to the purpose; for, in resisting the usurpations of a lawless and tyrannical despot, we are not to overturn the foundations of all government. And it may be certainly affirmed, that while the crouching slaves of the Vatican, in kissing the foot of the Roman Pontiff, and acknowledging him God's Vicar upon earth, concede infinitely too much to the claims of ministerial office, some democratic levellers in our Independent churches concede too little when

they attempt to strip their pastors of all official superiority, and reduce them to the rank of a mere speaking brother.

Respect then your minister for his office' sake: regard him, not indeed with feelings of superstitious dread, or slavish veneration, but not with light and frivolous familiarity. "Receive him with all gladness, and hold such in reputation." Welcome him not as your friend and companion merely, but as your minister; rejoice in him, not as one who is to be the grace and ornament of your parties, the enlivener of your social intercourse: he may indeed be this, but he must be much more than this. He comes to you as the "ambassador of God, to beseech you in Christ's stead, to be reconciled to God;" as the guide, watchman, instructor of your souls. How many reverential sentiments, how many respectful feelings, how many tender emotions, should be awakened by the avowal of such a relationship; by the utterance of the simple expression, "our minister." If the unholy pastor deserve no respect, either on account of his character, or his office which he only disgraces, a holy one is entitled to double honour; and let this view of his office protect him from all rude familiarity, all impertinent obtrusion, all contemptuous disesteem.

II. The Word of God claims for your minister a due regard to his authority. This arises out of the former claim, for office without authority is a solecism. I cannot forget that I am now on ground where it becomes me to tread softly, and not without a guide. I will read you a few passages of the New Testament. "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour." "Remember them which have the rule over

you." "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves." "Know them that are over you in the Lord." "Reprove, rebuke." "Rebuke sharply." Now certainly, no language can be more explicit or decisive on the point, that some kind of authority belongs to the ministers of religion; but the question is, what is the nature of this authority? And here we remark at once, that it is not personal and independent, but only derived and dependent: it is not legislatorial but judicial and executive: it is not an authority to make laws in the church, for Christ is the only Lawgiver, and his word the only statute book; it is only an authority to expound his laws, and enforce them in his name; it is not an authority to coerce men's minds, but to convince and to persuade: it is not an authority to deliver our injunctions with an "I say unto you," but a "Thus saith the Lord." If a duly appointed minister, that is, a minister elected by the church, and ordained by the laying on of the hands of the presbytery, advance anything that is contrary to sound doctrine, it is to be rejected without hesitation by the people, under the peril of the displeasure of Christ and of the loss of their own souls; nor will the Judge of quick and dead, at the last day, excuse an error merely because it was taught by a minister. And if the people are to receive only what is true, they must compare what they hear with the unerring standard of truth, they are "to prove all things, and hold fast only that which is good:" they must try the minister by the Bible, and not the Bible by the minister: and we do greatly desire to see more of this inquisitive research into the Scriptures of truth, and of this comparison of our discourses with the Word of God. But all this does not authorise our hearers to

sit from time to time in the critic's chair, in the caviller's seat; as if the end of hearing were to find out errors in the preacher, and to give employment to an ignorant, conceited, or malignant perverter of words and phrases. Nothing can be more opposed to the object and spirit of a right method of hearing the gospel, than that carping, quibbling disposition, which leads a person to sit hearkening for something on which to found an objection or a cavil. On this subject no language that I could employ would convey my ideas more forcibly than that which has been used by a distinguished and much-esteemed friend and brother, on an occasion similar to the present.

"He is responsible, not to you, but to his Master, both for the matter and manner of his preaching. You are not to dictate to him what he is to preach, or how he is to preach. You are not to determine from what texts he shall preach, or how he shall discuss them. He may, and doubtless will, use with thankfulness the hints which may be suggested to him, with becoming diffidence, even on this head. He will, I dare say, be ready to gratify the wishes of any, when respectfully expressed to him, whose peculiar state of mind, or the critical posture of whose circumstances may render it desirable for their consolation and instruction, that a particular subject, or passage of Scripture should be illustrated or explained; and no doubt he will judiciously apply the knowledge, which by pastoral visits and other means he may obtain, of the state of families and individuals, in the selection and application of the topics of his public ministry. But all this is very far from anything like the recognition of a right to dictate to him in this respect: for, if such a right were once acknowledged and enforced, the ends of a stated ministry would be

immediately defeated. The Christian pastor must give to each a portion in due season, but each would wish the sermon altogether and always especially adapted to his circumstances or his taste; and our brother would soon find the attempt to please every one as hopeless as the old man in the fable is represented to have done; and at the close of every sabbath would sit down in despair, with nothing but vexation, and disappointment, and chagrin, as the recompence of his thankless and useless toil. Perhaps if all in a congregation were to express their wishes as to what, and in what a manner a minister should preach, the confusion of sentiments would be as great as the confusion of tongues amongst the builders of Babel. One would have him always preaching upon certain doctrines, another would rather he never touched on them at all. One would prefer practical, another experimental preaching. One would desire him never to take an Arminian text, another never to take a Calvinistic text. One would like him always to preach from Paul, another, more frequently from James. One would like more of the cheering influence of the promises, another, more of the quickening power of the threatenings. One would have him to be a Boanerges, another a Barnabas. And I should, indeed, look upon our brother with pity and regret if I saw him driven at the mercy of such counter currents and crossing tides of sentiment. No, it is for him, with a dignified decision of character, with inflexible fidelity to the best interests of the people committed to his charge, and with a noble independence of everybody and everything but of truth, conscience, and God, to blend all these in his public ministry; to be a Boanerges to the presumptuous sinner, and a Barnabas

to the dejected saint; that every one in his turn may feel the probe or the balm applied to his particular wound, and see his own character reflected from the faithful mirror constantly held up in the pulpit for your contemplation. Thus your pastor will commend himself to every man's conscience, approve himself to God, a workman not needing to be ashamed, and at the great day be clear of the blood of all men.

"But when I say that preaching the word is a matter that belongs to your pastor, I mean to be understood in a still more literal sense than I have yet hinted at. This is an age of preaching, and we are thankful that it is so. Every church, almost, has in it some who preach occasionally, as well as the stated pastor, and by means of such, many a benighted village has been enlightened. I wish that there were more pious and judicious, as well as zealous young men, in our respective churches, disposed to sacrifice their own ease and enjoyment to a great degree on the sabbath-day, and go forth to the dark, the rude, and the long-neglected hamlets round us, to tell to their little less than barbarous inhabitants the wondrous story of redeeming love! But there is danger even here, as well as in everything we do, of the abuse of that which is in itself most excellent. We have known preachers arise in a church, who have at length attained to such perfection in the art of preaching, in their own esteem, that the pastor has become nothing in comparison of them; and when they have condescended to cease from their own labours to give him a hearing, it has been for little else than to criticise his manner, or to sit in judgment on his orthodoxy. Others, again, have obtruded themselves into the pastor's place, and by hints and offers of service, which he had

not the fortitude or prudence to resist, have gained possession of the pulpit, until the preacher has been actually outpreached, and the good man has been glad to retire, for the sake of peace, to a less gifted congregation; for his own have grown wiser than their teacher, and more disposed to instruct him than to listen with a suitable disposition to his instructions."* -

In the performance of his duty, it belongs to your pastor to preside at all the meetings of the church, in the meekness of wisdom and the mildness of love it is true, but still in the chair of office, and in the exercise of authority. He is to bring forward all the business that is to be attended to, or is to appoint those by whom it shall be laid before the brethren; for what scenes of disorder and confusion may be expected, if any and every one "who has a dream, should be allowed to tell his dream." He is to explain every case, to show in what way the Scripture bears upon the point, and to what decision the church should come. Not that his opinion should be received by the members without deliberation, and adopted as law contrary to the convictions of the body over which he presides; but still, it should be listened to with great deference, and never be opposed out of mere capricious resistance to his authority, for all such opposition is a direct disturbance of the peace of the society, and a rebellion against the appointment of Christ, who has commanded the members of churches "to submit themselves to those who have the rule over them." And when at any time it becomes necessary for the members to dissent from the opinion of their pastor, and to express their dissent, as it some-

* Dr. Raffles' sermon at the ordination of the Rev. J. Parsons.

times may, this should be done in the same respectful manner as the barristers in our legal courts express their difference of view from the official expounders of the law upon the bench. No minister who has a right idea either of himself as a fallible man, or of his authority as a mere executive and responsible officer, will, in the management of church affairs, wish or strive to have every matter decided according to his own inclination, for this would be ecclesiastical despotism; so neither will any member who has a right view of the pastoral office ever oppose his minister's views, except it can be made manifest that they are unscriptural; and even then, he will do it in a manner which shall neither undermine his authority, nor lessen the confidence which the church reposes in his general wisdom.

A pastor is personally responsible to Christ for the peace and good order of the church under his care; but who would undertake so fearful a charge, if a system of suspicious, obtrusive, impertinent intermeddling were allowed to be carried on by those who can only make themselves known by making mischief. It is a radical error, a fundamental mistake, in reference to the principles of Independency, to suppose that the pastor is a mere chairman, sitting amidst the brethren, rather to hear the opinions of others, than to deliver instructions in the name of the Lord. Church meetings are not intended for debate and discussion, except so far as is actually necessary; and in a well-conducted society such necessity rarely occurs. In all popular assemblies, whether civil or sacred, there will usually be found some praters and busy bodies, whose officious interference should be resisted and suppressed by the good sense of the body. It will be often found that those are most

fond of talking who are least worthy of being listened to, and that those who are most prone to interfere are least deserving of confidence. Church meetings are or should be devotional meetings, and everything should be conducted in a spirit of devotion, under the direction of the pastor. Wherefore, my brethren, be not many masters, for one is your master, even Christ, whose servant is in the midst of you, to rule and guide, in his name. And, depend upon it, you not only best consult the comfort of your minister, but your own peace and prosperity as a church, and your own edification as individual believers, by respecting the office, and acknowledging the scriptural authority of your pastor.

III. Your minister has a claim upon you for your regular, punctual, and serious attendance upon his ministry. Preaching, united public prayer, and sacramental services, to be conducted by duly appointed ministers, are ordinances instituted by Christ, for the building up of his church, upon which all persons are under a solemn obligation to attend. The ends of ministerial labours are two, instruction and impression. It is surely not claiming too much for men, who set apart their whole time to the study of God's Word, and of whatever else may help them to understand the Scriptures, to suppose that they have more enlarged views of divine truth, than most of their hearers; but were not this granted, yet as it is recollected that impression is another end of our labours, our people are still bound to attend upon our ministry; for who, however small their knowledge, act up to what they know? Who, if they are real Christians, and possess accurate though inadequate ideas, do not need more to be quickened and warned than to be informed? And, for such ends as

these, how wisely adapted are the preaching of the gospel, "and the breaking of bread, and fellowship, and prayers." The very choice of a minister is an implied promise given on the part of the people, that they will attend statedly upon his public ministrations.

But I said, that this attendance should be regular. There are some persons, in perhaps all congregations, of whom it is difficult to conceive by what principle their attendance on public ordinances is regulated. We can no more depend upon their presence than we can upon the wind's blowing from a certain point in the heavens. Sometimes they are with us for several sabbaths successively, and then we miss them for a still longer time. There are others, who, though not so extremely irregular, are far more so than they should be. Conceive how disheartening it must be to a minister, when he has selected a subject with special reference to some individual case, when he has studied it with much anxiety and prayer, when he has designed that it shall in every part be adapted, without being in the offensive sense of the term personal, then to find, on his coming to the pulpit, that the person for whom all this solicitude was cherished, was not in his place. His minister came with a message from God to him, but he was not there to receive it; a blessing was brought for him, but he, impelled to some other place of worship by idle curiosity, was not in the way to be blessed. Well, painful and vexatious as it is for ministers thus to lose the object of their particular studies, the blessing itself is not lost, for there are always some present to whom it is as suitable as to the individual for whom it was designed, and by whom it will be more valued and improved. We are sometimes reproached by hearers for not visiting them

in sickness, and on replying that we were not informed of their illness, are told that we might have missed them from public worship; to whom we are able to answer, that while some of the congregation are so regular in their attendance, that their absence from a single sermon would excite anxiety and lead enquiry into the cause; as for them, they are so often away, without adequate cause, that their absence for almost any length of time, never leads to any apprehension concerning their health.

It may not be amiss here to glance at some of the causes of irregular attendance on public worship. Distance from the place may be mentioned as keeping many away. It is now become a pretty general custom, and it is by no means a censurable one, for persons to live as near the country as possible; for who would not rather reside amidst green fields, and inhale pure air, than be shut up in narrow streets, and breathe a smoky atmosphere, and if health do not require a rural retreat, yet it is so agreeable that every one may well covet such a pleasant and innocent gratification. But then it is likely to become a snare in keeping us away from the house of God, and is in fact too often made an excuse for such a neglect of religious duty. Many modern Christians have quite reconciled themselves to one service on the sabbath, and to none all the week besides; and even this one visit to the house of prayer is sometimes withheld when the weather is not perfectly to their mind. Is it any wonder that the religion of the present day falls so far short of the depth, earnestness, and fervour of that of our forefathers, if we thus forsake the assembling of ourselves together? Is it any wonder

if spirituality decline, if lukewarmness spread through the soul, when the ordinances of public worship are thus neglected? No persons should, unless at the dictate of absolute necessity, allow themselves to go so far from their accustomed place of worship, as to be prevented from attending the public means of grace twice on the sabbath. Nor should the week day services be neglected by those who can conveniently attend them. I am aware that, in the present age, the claims of business are such, that a man cannot always command his time, but I have remarked that many of those whom I knew to be most deeply involved in the cares of life, and to be the most diligent tradesmen, were the most regular attendants on our meetings for social prayer and our week-day sermons. By system, by early rising, by diligence through the day, and by abstaining from voluntary engagements, most men may contrive, in the ordinary state of things, to get their worldly business finished time enough in the evening to devote an hour once or twice a week to the house of prayer. Mothers of large families, with a heavy burthen of domestic care and responsibility, cannot be expected to neglect their household in an evening, even to hear a sermon; but yet of these, I have known some of the most fond and careful mothers, some of the most attentive and judicious mistresses, in whose domestic economy nothing was wanting and nothing disorderly, who were amongst the most regular attendants on the services of the week. Method, diligence, and punctuality, will do wonders in providing opportunities, where there is a desire to possess them, and an inclination to embrace them. But still, I again admit, that to neglect household affairs, to

leave home uncomfortable, and children unprovided for, in order to be present at a prayer meeting or a sermon, if such must unavoidably be the result, cannot be the duty of the female head of a family.

Another cause of irregular attendance is the too prevailing practice of Sunday feasting. In the poor man's cottage the wife, and in the rich man's house the servants, are often detained from public worship in the morning, to provide for the gratifications of the palate. But is this the purpose for which the sabbath is given to man? Is this the remembering it to keep it holy? The case of servants, in such instances, is peculiarly hard. After they have been working all the week for our comfort and ease, we might surely lighten their labours on the day of rest; and passing by the hardship to their bodies of keeping them at labour on the sabbath morning, in what state are their minds for receiving religious instruction in the afternoon? There is, indeed, a great deal of sabbath breaking in the world; and I am afraid there is not a little in the church: there is much in the streets that meets the eye and the ear; and I fear there is not a little within doors, concealed from general observation. Could not the wives and children of some professing Christians tell strange tales of sabbaths at home?

A roving spirit of unhallowed curiosity causes many to be very irregular in their attendance at their own place of worship. Is there no such malady now, as that which partially infected the churches in the apostle's time, and which he denominated, "having itching ears?" Is it not a very widely spread, and still more widely spreading, epidemic? There are some persons who act as if they believe that novelty is the spice of re-

ligion, as well as of life. Not a charity sermon is anywhere preached, but they are sure to be there to hear it, although the funds are rarely the richer for their munificence: funeral sermons have an irresistible attraction: and it would be thought by them almost a sin not to run after every popular preacher of every denomination who happens to come to town; and, as they have a taste for music, Sunday concerts, whether performed in a protestant or a catholic chapel, in a church or a meeting house, for most have them by turns, are an object of great delight; because they can thus, as they suppose, unite the pleasures of faith and of sense. But is this a spirit becoming the sobriety, seriousness, and steadiness which should ever characterise religious profession? Few and rare are the occasions on which a person should allow himself to be absent from his own accustomed place of worship. Were I a hearer, instead of a preacher, I think it would be my effort to try, and my exultation to find, what temptations I could resist, what occasional sacrifices I could make, rather than be absent from my own pew on the Sabbath day. And this steadiness of attendance should be maintained, not only when your own pastor is at home, but also, when he is abroad; for there is something quite childish in running away from an occasional supply, because his voice is unmusical, his imagination dull, his style not classical, or his preaching not impassioned. What is this, but to treat the house of God as a theatre, ministers as actors, and sermons as mere performances. Curiosity, such as that I have been describing, is distinct and separate from a thirst after truth, and from the sober, serious disposition with which truth is pursued. It is an unhallowed propensity, a puerile taste,

the mark of a light and frivolous mind, which, with childish versatility, is ever seeking after some new toy, and cannot be pleased with any one long. I am anxious to see the Christian world purified from all its follies, and to see the professors of religion manifesting, even in minor points, the dignified steadiness and sobriety which comport with their principles, hopes, and aims; and the absence of which must abstract from their profession much of its consistency, beauty, and attractiveness.

I said that your attendance upon your minister should be punctual. Come to the house of God in time; for late attendance, which is a crying sin in all our congregations, is an excessive annoyance to the more serious and orderly worshippers, is disrespectful to the preacher and an insult to God.

And come seriously. Come from the closet to the sanctuary; from private prayer to public worship: from the act of praying for the minister, to the act of hearing him preach. It is at home that the fire of devotion should be kindled, the preparation of the heart effected, and the soul reminded of the solemn nature of the service in which she is about to engage. We should ever go up to the house of the Lord, remembering that we are entering into the presence of the Eternal, before whom angels veil their faces, to commune with him on his throne of infinite majesty and heavenly grace, and to listen to his terms of life and salvation. The most sublime spectacle on earth, and the most interesting and encouraging to a minister's heart, is a large congregation, assembled punctually on a Sabbath morning, waiting in solemn silence for their teacher; whose devout appearance seems to say to him as he enters, we are all

here present before God, "to hear all things that are commanded thee of God."

IV. A minister has a claim upon his people for their sincere and fervent affection. "Esteem them very highly in love."

1. This love should be apparent: for however strong it may be, yet if it be confined to the heart, it can be of little value to its object. But who can conceal an ardent attachment, when opportunities are continually occurring, which not only allow, but even invite expressions of it? A minister should no more be in doubt of the attachment of his people than he is of that of his wife and children. The coldness and distance of some of our flock are poor evidences of regard. Not that we covet an attachment which expresses itself in silly epithets, fawning sycophancy, or disgusting flattery; it is difficult sometimes to repress the contempt we feel for those who offer such nauseating incense. The affection which we desire, is not that weak and childish fondness of which a wise man would be ashamed, but a more dignified kind, which an angel would not blush to receive.

2. Your love for your minister should be candid: for charity covers a multitude of faults. By candour, I do not mean that spurious liberality which is not only attached to an object, notwithstanding his faults, but actually on account of them. I trust we shall never live to see the day when character will be thought by our churches to be of little importance in their pastors though certain strong symptoms of this are apparent in a few of them. Let a man only pander to their erroneous predilections, their perverted imaginations, their

antinomian taste; let him be their boon companion in private, and be a little tolerant towards their inconsistencies, and some will be disposed to be peculiarly indulgent in return, towards even his wide departures from ministerial consistency.* Levity, malice, folly, and even suspected intemperance, will be connived at, if he have only ingratiated himself into those affections which are too blind to see anything wrong in a darling object. I ask no candour for a man, who, though receiving a competent salary, lives in extravagance and self-indulgence beyond his income, and involves himself in debt and disgrace. I ask no candour for a man, who, though he may not be a drunkard, is a tippler. I ask no candour for a man, who, though he be neither fornicator nor adulterer, indulges in indecent liberties with females. I ask no candour for a man who is malicious and implacable, and who, by the bitterness of his animosities, is perpetually involving himself and his friends in feuds

* I by no means give it as my opinion that churches are to be inexorable towards a minister, who has been "*overtaken* in a fault;" much less that his brethren should for ever withdraw from him, after he has given the most unequivocal and satisfactory proofs of repentance, as well as grief. Some falls, however, are so disgraceful, as to be sufficient to exclude a man for ever from the pulpit, whatever may be his compunction or reformation; and in no case of immorality should a minister be restored to the confidence of the churches, or his brethren, without such evidence of penitence as would restore a private member to the communion. And in all cases of ministerial defection, it does appear to me that character should be regained where it has been lost, and that the same church which causes him to suspend his labours, should restore him again to his pulpit; they who have been the witnesses of his sin, should be the judges of his repentance. Amongst them, however humiliating it may be, he should walk humbly, and bring forth the fruits of repentance, and if restored to their confidence, there exists no reason why in many cases he may not be restored to their pulpit.

and quarrels. I ask no candour for a man who receives money from his people for public objects, and refuses to account for it. I ask no candour for the liar or calumniator; and I rejoice that our ministers are not such; so that I have no need to ask candour for these things. God forbid I should ask for the tolerance of sin in the ministerial character. "A bishop must be blameless, of good report from them that are without, not given to wine, not fond of filthy lucre, an example to believers in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity." His character, like that of Cæsar's wife, must be above suspicion; and did he preach with the tongue of an angel, yet without something of an angel's holiness, his eloquence should be in our ears but as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. The charity then, which I ask, is not for an unholy man, but for an imperfect one; for those infirmities which attach even to the best of men in this world; the candour which thinks no evil, which is not easily provoked, which suffers long and is kind; which covers all things, believes all things, hopes all things: which is disposed to diminish, rather than to magnify imperfections; and to conceal, rather than to expose them; but I do ask for every minister, from the people of his charge, for that charity which is backward to take offence, especially on doubtful grounds. We are commanded, I know, to give no offence, and in the meaning of the apostle, I trust we shall give none; but to live so as in no sense to give offence to any one, is a very difficult, if not an impossible task. With so many to please, and those possessing such various and changing inclinations, it is too much to expect that we shall be able to avoid displeasing some. It is really surprising and painful to think what insignificant cir-

cumstances will sometimes, quite unintentionally, on the part of a minister, give offence to some of his hearers. Calling a little oftener on some than on others; or, forgetting to call according to his promise; not visiting the sick, when no one had informed him of their illness; preaching a little longer or a little shorter than usual; a supposition that he was personal, when he had no individual on earth in his mind as the special object of address; passing a house without stepping in, or not stopping to converse with an individual in the street, when speeding on an errand of mercy, or on some important business; speaking with less frankness or cheerfulness, and with an appearance of coldness, when, perhaps, the mind was burthened with grief, or travailing with some great purpose: these, and less than these, are the frivolous circumstances on account of which some petulant minds are displeased with their minister. I can only say, that to such trifles, none but triflers can attend: and it is impossible that the most charitable or watchful mind can avoid giving offence to those who are thus predisposed to take it. But, where is their affection? Where is their candour?

3. Your affection to your minister should be practical. It should lead you studiously to avoid everything that would give him, not only lasting distress, but even momentary uneasiness; and as anxiously to do everything to promote his comfort. It should be matter of actual study, of frequent and deliberate counsel, in what way you can promote his happiness in the situation to which you have invited him. In the prosecution of this object, you must be a holy and consistent people, following "whatsover things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things

are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report." "You must adorn the doctrine of God your Saviour," by all conversation and godliness. "You must deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present evil world." You must "come out and be separate, and touch not the unclean thing, and not be conformed to this world." Do what you will in other things, fill his purse with wealth, his house with presents, and his ear with words of tenderest affection, still, after all, if he see you decline in the spirit and practice of religion, if he witness you walking inconsistently, forgetting your obligation to the practice of the most refined morality, he will be, and necessarily must be, a miserable man. Your sins will inflict wounds on his heart which nothing can heal, and throw a gloom on his path which nothing can irradiate. You must be holy, or he cannot be happy; your irregularities will embitter his cup of consolation, however full or sweet it might otherwise be.

To promote his comfort, you must be at peace among yourselves. He cannot be happy amongst a divided and discordant people: such a state of things is an impediment in the way both of his usefulness and of his comfort. What a wretched condition is that pastor in, who sees the influential members of his church, jealous of each other, alienated and unable to act together; the different families of his flock living not only in estrangement, but in ill will; while each party is filling his ear with complaints against the other: the deacons jealous of the interference of the people, the people suspicious of the conduct or the motives of the deacons; the whole body in that loose connection, that preparedness for division, which place the coherence of the society in

peril on the discussion of the most trivial question. A minister in such a situation must have anything but comfort. "Fulfil ye my joy," said the apostle to the Philippians, "that ye be like minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through strife or vain glory, but in lowliness of mind, let each esteem others better than themselves." Even an apostle could not be happy while the churches were not at peace, although he resided at a distance from them: how much less can a pastor be comfortable who stands in the very breach. "Seek after the things that make for peace, and things whereby ye may edify one another." "Look diligently, lest any root of bitterness springing up, trouble you, and thereby many be defiled." "Be clothed with humility," for "by pride cometh contention." Seek to be more holy; for "from whence cometh wars and fightings among you? Come they not hence, even of your lusts?" "Be subject one to another;" the young to the aged, the novice to the experienced Christian, the ill-informed to the wise. Avoid all private feuds. Seek after more love to Christ. Get more of that charity which Paul has so beautifully described, and this will keep you at peace among yourselves. Disturbances and divisions in our churches reflect discredit upon our principles as dissenters, and upon our religion as Christians; they are a great injury to personal piety, throw a stumbling block in the way of the young, and not only grieve a pastor's mind, but form an impediment to the success of his labours.

Practical affection to your minister will lead you to provide liberally for his support; for that is a singular kind of love which leaves its object to want. I greatly

disesteem a greedy, grasping minister, who though not scantily supplied by his people, is ever complaining of his poverty, and perpetually teasing them for an increase of salary; and I as cordially detest the conduct of that church, the members of which drive a really deserving and necessitous pastor to knock and to knock in vain at the door of their cold and callous hearts for assistance. I bless God that instances are rare amongst us in which ministers are thus obliged to beg for support, or in which their flocks imagine that all they give for their pastor's salary is to be set down on the list of their alms deeds. The Divine Head of the church has, by an explicit law, interfered for the comfortable support of all his ministers. He has enjoined no fixed sum, because, as everything in his kingdom is to be performed under the influence of love, and all is left in that way which is best calculated to be a test of love, the provision for his servants is trusted to the operation of this general principle; and we may be quite sure, that where there is a proper regard cherished by the people for their minister, they will not leave him to want. It is not desirable, except in cases of absolute necessity, that a pastor should be encumbered with the cares of secular business, not even by the profession of a schoolmaster; for the nature of his duties, as well as scriptural injunction, requires that he should give himself wholly to his office; but still, inasmuch as even the apostolic office itself was not disgraced by the handicraft labours of those who filled it, so neither can the ministry now be degraded by such employments, where expediency or necessity requires them. Paul's exhortation to others evidently enjoins a separation of ministers from secular pursuits, but his example allows of exceptions from his own general rule.

And certainly, a preacher of righteousness is far less disgraced by being seen a part of his time even in a retail shop, than he who, to support the dignity of his office, disdains to soil his clerical hands with vulgar trading, though perhaps many a hope-sick creditor in his congregation is continually replying to all his admonitions from the pulpit, "Pay me what thou owest."

4. Your love should be minute and delicate in its attentions. There are a thousand ways of manifesting regard, too varying and minute to be specified. Love is a virtue which adapts itself to the occasion, whether it be great or small; it can rise to the sublimity of martyrdom for its object, or it can descend to extract the thorn from the foot, or the mote from the eye. And as the occasions for its more gigantic efforts occur but rarely, while those for its more minute attentions are of daily recurrence, you should be more careful about the latter than the former. A minister would be but ill qualified for the exercise of those tender sensibilities which his office calls for, if he had not a heart alive to the value of even the most delicate expressions of his people's attachment.

5. Your love should be constant. There is a fickleness in the human character which not unfrequently finds its way into the church of God. The victims of inconstancy are not a few, and great is the torture which attends the slow process of dying of a broken heart. Manly a lovely and worthy woman has lived long enough to have her mind tormented by contrasting the vast difference between the bride and the wife, and to measure by the extent of her misery the wide extremes of idolatrous attention and unconcealed hatred; and a similar remark may be made of some excellent

ministers, who by turns have become the idols of affection and the martyrs of inconstancy. At this we are not to be surprised, when even the illustrious Jonathan Edwards, one of the greatest, if not the first, uninspired divine that ever lived, was driven from a church in which he had been made extensively useful, and where he had been once remarkably happy, for no other reason than because he had wounded parental pride, by rebuking, (perhaps in an injudicious manner,) some of his young people for immoral conduct. Yea, even the great apostle tells us of some, who at one time would have plucked out their eyes for him, but had become his enemies because he had told them the truth. Sometimes, I am aware, a change of affection is the result of a hasty and ill-advised election; but if a minister continue to be all that he was when he was chosen, the people, like a man who has formed an unsuitable connection in marriage, should abide by their choice, and suffer the punishment of their folly, as a warning to others. In those cases where a pastor becomes indolent, and by the neglect both of his private and public duties, gives his flock just reason to complain of the miserable poverty of his discourses, as well as of the frivolity of his general conduct, he should be reminded first by the senior brethren or deacons, in a candid, respectful, and affectionate manner of his omissions; and then, if he do not alter and become more diligent, should be told by the united voice of the people, that as he was chosen to be a labourer and not a loiterer, he had violated his engagement, and was at liberty to depart. If a minister become unholy, or so imprudent as to injure his reputation, destroy his usefulness, or interrupt all pleasant intercourse between him and his people, in such cases

the hearts of his flock must and ought to be alienated from him. And I have no doubt that oftentimes, perhaps most frequently, the fault of a disagreement is to be traced up almost exclusively to the bad temper, imprudence, or suspected morality of the pastor. Still, however, instances do occur of the most censurable versatility on the part of congregations, which, when the freshness of novelty has faded from the labours of their pastor, grow tired of him, and want a change. Be upon your guard, then, against every thing which would alienate your heart from your minister. Extinguish the first risings of disaffection, for nothing grows so fast as dislike; and if at any time circumstances should arise, which, though they do not affect the character of your pastor, or his fitness for the situation he occupies, render it impossible for any individual to remain any longer under his ministry, let such person go quietly away. It is an honorable step in your religious career to remove to the communion of another church, compared with the conduct of those who remain to spread disaffection, and to excite rebellion.

V. Your minister has a just claim upon you for your respectful attention to the instructions, counsels, and reproofs, which he may feel it to be his duty to deliver to you in private.

If he feel as he ought, the weight of your soul's affairs, pressing upon his own, he will visit you in your habitations, not merely to receive the rites of hospitality, but to "watch for your souls as one that must give account," and to admonish you on the subjects that relate to your everlasting welfare. I am sure you will not think it necessary to provide for him a feast of fat things, or suppose that the only lure that can draw him

to your house is a well spread table. You will rather "receive him as a prophet, in the name of a prophet;" and instead of saying, "here is the minister coming, we shall now be amused by anecdote, or entertained by news," will joyfully exclaim, "here is the man of God approaching, we shall now have a word in season, on the high themes of eternity." If it be a convenient time, and the business of the day should be over, lay the Bible upon the table, and gather round him your family, that he might instruct them, admonish them, and pray with them. Consider him, not indeed as your confessor, in the Popish sense of the term, but still as your divinely commissioned instructor, the resolver of your doubts, the guide and comforter of your soul, amidst all her perplexities and anxieties. Treat him on such occasions with the confidence that is due both to his office and to his affection; lay open to him the state of your mind; acknowledge to him your difficulties, your feelings, your fears, and seek at his lips the words of instruction or of consolation. There is not enough of this hallowed confidential intercourse between the shepherd and the flock in the present age. How edifying would it be, if the families of a congregation, were, separately, if their number were not too great; or, if it were so, in unions of two or three families together, to invite the pastor to spend an hour occasionally with them, for the express purpose of counselling and addressing them on religious matters. How much more consistent would this be, than an imitation of the expensive feasts of the men of the world. It is an insult to the ministerial character to suppose that it is a necessary compliment to those who bear it, to set before them the dainties of the epicure.

And if, at any time, your minister, in the exercise of what must ever be considered to be the most delicate and self-denying part of his duty, should come to you in the character of a reprover, and should find it necessary even to "rebuke sharply," I admonish you, that instead of treating his reproofs with silent contempt, careless indifference, or angry resentment, you bow down to them with a spirit of ingenuous and dignified submission. Instead of saying, "Who made thee a ruler and a judge over us?" imitate the Psalmist and exclaim, "Let the righteous smite me, and it shall be a kindness; it shall be as excellent oil that will not break my head." And if in the perplexity of determining the precise degree of sharpness that the rebuke should contain, he should give to it more severity than you may imagine the offence calls for, still acquiesce in a spirit of meekness, remembering that it is a mercy to be healed, though by a somewhat unnecessary degree of probing; and that it is better to be plucked with violence from ruin, than to be suffered to go softly to perdition. Do not account him your enemy, nor become his, because in faithful love he has reproved you. This part of his duty is truly distressing to him.

VI. Your minister has a claim upon you for your co-operation in all his judicious schemes of usefulness, whether they respect your own church, the town in which you live, or the world at large.

It is not sufficiently considered that Christian churches are formed and set up to be the lights of the earth. Beautiful and instructive is the language of God, speaking by the prophet. "And I will make them, and the places round about my hill, a blessing: and I will cause the shower to come down in his season; there

shall be showers of blessings." Now, although this language refers primarily to the Jews, as settled again in their native land, yet it may be applied with great propriety to every Christian church, as descriptive of its duty to exert a local and beneficial influence on all around it, so as to become a foreign and a home missionary society within itself. Of course its own interests are its first, but not its exclusive, concern. In all schemes of public utility, the pastor must be expected to take the lead. Often will his anxious mind revolve the question, "What more can I do for my vineyard, that I have not yet done for it?" Sunday schools, congregational libraries, societies for visiting the sick, tract societies, village itinerancies, benefit societies, will all be viewed by him, as means of associating the energies, and calling forth the exertions of his people for the public good. To such plans and efforts, as well as to the cause of foreign missions, he will often call your attention. Not unfrequently will he lay before you, either in your smaller circles, or at your church meetings, some benevolent scheme which he has devised, some object of mercy which he is anxious to accomplish, but in which he cannot proceed without your zealous co-operation: on such occasions do not let him perceive cold, calculating, repulsive looks; nor hear frivolous and cavilling objections, which sound more like the pleas of covetousness, than the suggestions of prudence: do not let your own torpor benumb his energies, nor the frosty atmosphere of your souls chill the ardour of his heart. You are of course to examine the schemes of his benevolence, no less than the doctrine of his sermons; you are not expected to support any wild and visionary schemes of a romantic zeal; scrutinise everything with

impartiality, in order that you may give him the support of your judgment, as well as of your heart, and of your purse. A minister cannot be happy with a people whom he does not respect; and how can he respect those, whose apathy or avarice in reference to public spirit, leads him to exclaim, "no man stood by me, and of the people there was none with me." And then, there is another piece of advice I would give you, and that is, not to engage yourselves to schemes and adventurers in the field of benevolence, from which he holds back; at least till you have asked and heard his reasons for declining. He will not wish to make his views your law; but he may have reasons for not acting, which you would, perhaps, approve, if you knew them, and which you might know by asking for them.

VII. A minister claims his people's prayers. If apostles, in whom dwelt the gift of a divine inspiration, who wrought miracles, planted churches, and wrote the Scriptures, cast themselves upon the prayers of the people, and ascribed their success in a great degree to the supplications which were presented on their behalf, surely such means of assistance cannot be unnecessary for the ordinary ministers of the word. We therefore give a most emphatic echo to the demand of Paul, and say, "Brethren, pray for us." I ask, then, on behalf of your minister, for your constant supplications that his life and health may be spared; that his personal religion may be maintained in full vigour; that he may remain sound in the faith; that he may be guided in his private studies, and assisted to attain to still more enlarged and profound views of truth; that he may be apt to teach, and skilful in dealing with the consciences of men; that he may not shun to declare the whole

counsel of God; and that he may be eminently successful in the conversion of sinners, and the edification of believers. Pray for him at your social meetings, and consider this as one great object of such meetings. Pray for him at your seasons of family worship, and thus teach your children and servants to love and respect him. Pray for him in the closet, when you retire to commune with God, who sees in secret. Remember that his personal piety, his pastoral fidelity, his ministerial success, all depend upon divine grace. Without the aid of the Holy Spirit he can do nothing. Even Paul would have planted, and Apollos have watered, in vain, had not God given the increase. The total and universal corruption of human nature, and the necessity of divine grace for its renovation and sanctification, fundamental articles of your faith, furnish equal reasons for the offering earnest prayer on behalf of your minister.

Such, then, are the claims of your minister, and did time permit, or did any question about their validity exist, I would urge them on the ground of justice; for, in the very act of choosing a minister, you give him a right to expect all that I have stated. I could urge them on the ground of gratitude; for how many benefits, what rich consolations, is he the instrument of imparting to you. I could urge them on the ground of interest; for in yielding them, you promote your own and your children's welfare. I could urge them on the ground of piety; for God has demanded them on his behalf. Nothing now remains, but that in conclusion, I refer you to the solemn day of scrutiny and of decision, when your minister must give an account how he has preached, and you, an equally strict account how you have heard.

In prospect of that tremendous and eventful scene, I admonish you, that "you receive not the grace of God in vain." "To you is the word of salvation sent." "Therefore you ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which you have heard, lest at any time you should let them slip. For, if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward, how will you escape, if you neglect so great salvation." In prospect of the judgment day, I solemnly warn you, that as you have a minister, who will preach to you the law, by which is the knowledge of sin, and the gospel, by which is the knowledge of pardon, your condemnation will be awful indeed, if you live and die impenitent, unbelieving and unholy. You have chosen a man, who, as you shall improve his ministry, or neglect it, will be a blessing, or an unwilling occasion of your greater guilt here, and of your greater misery hereafter. He must be "a savour of death unto death," if you will not allow him to be "a savour of life unto life." Prepare to meet him at the bar of God.

THE ADVANTAGES AND OBLIGATIONS OF YOUTH IN REFERENCE TO THE CAUSE OF CHRISTIAN MISSIONS STATED AND ENFORCED.

A SERMON,

PREACHED TO THE MEMBERS OF
JUVENILE AUXILIARY MISSIONARY SOCIETIES

IN THE POULTRY CHAPEL, MAY 12, 1828,

AT THE THIRTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE MISSIONARY SOCIETY.

John iv, 38.

Other men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours.

In these words, and in the context, our Lord compares the moral renovation of mankind to the process of agriculture. The field is the world; the seed is divine truth; the husbandmen are the prophets of the Old Testament, the apostles of the New, with all other ministers of religion; entering in succession upon the scene of labour, some to plough, others to sow, and the rest to reap: the course of spiritual vegetation is ever continued, not indeed at all times with equal rapidity, for there are wintery seasons in the moral as in the natural world, nor in all places with equal results, since God, in the exercise of his wise, inscrutable, and irresponsible sovereignty, has given greater luxuriance to some soils than to others: every person and every thing is preparing for, and hastening to, the general harvest at the end of time. Our Lord, that he might rouse the energies and encourage the hopes of his apostles, reminded them how much had been done by John the Baptist and the prophets to prepare their way, to facilitate their labours, and to ensure their success. Information had been diffused, attention had

been fixed, expectation had been awakened, and the minds of men in some measure prepared for the great announcement of the gospel: the ploughmen had been in the field to break up the fallow ground, the sowers had scattered the seed, and now they were about to thrust in the sickle of the reapers, and to bear home with rejoicing those sheaves, the seed of which had been sown with many tears, by the men of a former generation.

I. This subject, young people, (for you are the special objects of my address to-night,) is exceedingly appropriate to you, as very accurately setting forth the relation in which you stand to that great cause which has convened us this evening. Listen to me attentively, while, in the first division of my discourse, I attempt to give a short survey of the principal events which have occurred since the beginning of time, and to trace their influence upon the moral culture of mankind.

This world, as it was finished by the hand of the Creator, was a place of ineffable loveliness; its natural and spiritual scenery corresponded perfectly to each other, and the material beauty of Paradise was but an emblem of the still richer beauties of holiness reflected from the first human pair, while they bore the unsullied image of their God. Their apostacy changed the aspect of the whole; and the garden of the Lord, both within and around them, became a wilderness. Jehovah did not, however, abandon in disgust and indignation his disfigured and desolated heritage: but, in execution of the scheme which, upon a foresight of the fall, he had devised from eternity, and which had a direct reference to the cross of Christ as its centre, commenced that series of means and operations which is designed ulti-

mately to make the wilderness and solitary place to be glad, and the desert to rejoice and blossom as the rose. Before Adam quitted the scene of his transgression, the mercy of God laid for him, in the curse denounced upon the serpent, and the promised seed of the woman, the foundation of faith and hope, and therefore of penitence and holiness, and illustrated and attested all by the rite of animal sacrifice. Amidst the increasing crimes of the antediluvian world, the solitary voice of Enoch was lifted up in warning; while his miraculous translation, by opening a vista into the eternal state, and furnishing a proof of both the resurrection of the body and the immortality of the soul, supplied, in a most impressive form, the doctrine of man's future existence, without which morality has no foundation, and there is no consolation for the ills of life. That warning and that lesson failing, the Almighty, by the deluge, swept from the face of the earth the human race, as altogether abandoned and corrupt, planting it again from the holy stock of Noah, and giving a display of his own wrath against sin, which has never been forgotten in the traditions of the nations. When human pride and ambition had conceived the gigantic scheme of a universal tyranny, with the tower of Babel for its capitol, the design was frustrated by the confusion of tongues; and the dispersion of mankind which ensued originated or foreshadowed that system of colonisation which is ultimately to fill the world with a people prepared for the Lord. In the calling of Abraham, the plans of heaven began to be more clearly developed, and the purposes of divine mercy to expand with rapidity; then commenced that magnificent series of communications between the visible and invisible world, which, while

they related primarily to the great Redeemer and Reformer of mankind, had a special reference to the Jews, that extraordinary people, whose history has borne, and, though less conspicuously, still bears so important a part in the great drama of providence. To preserve the chosen seed from being corrupted by the idolatry of the Canaanites, they were sent, by a train of singular events, originating in the envy of Joseph's brethren, to sojourn amongst the Egyptians, to whose mythology they were opposed both by their pastoral habits and their sacrificial rites. When they were so miraculously multiplied, notwithstanding the cruelties practised to exterminate them, as to be sufficient to people the promised land, they were delivered from the house of bondage by awful visitations, intended not merely to humble the pride of the Egyptian power, but to be so many proofs of the folly and wickedness of Egyptian idolatry. At the base of Sinai the Jews were formed into a nation, and fenced off from all other people by the peculiarities of their law, which served at once as a rule of moral conduct, a system of municipal regulations, and a dark shadow of the means of human redemption; but the great design of which was to preserve amongst them, when lost by all the world besides, the knowledge of the one living and true God, and the hope of eternal life through a system of sacrificial mediation. After forty years' wandering in the wilderness, during which many impressive types of the great work of the Son of God were displayed, they were settled in Canaan, then the centre of the known world, where they might be a witness for Jehovah before all nations. After awhile, the spirit of prophecy, the testimony of Jesus, which from the beginning had thrown a few scattered gleams

upon the darkness of futurity, diffused a glowing lustre upon the otherwise impervious gloom, and disclosed, in splendid vision, the glories which, in the train of Messiah, were advancing to fill the earth. By the frequent captivities of the Jews, and especially by the more permanent and extensive one in Babylon, exiles from Judea carried with them to other lands their sacred books, and spread through the East a vague notion of the approaching reign of Christ. The Persian monarchy was raised up to overthrow that of Babylon, to break in pieces the yoke of the oppressor, and to restore to their native land the nation on whose preservation depended the purposes of mercy towards our guilty world. The Grecian ascended to dominion upon the ruins of the Persian, and by rendering the Greek tongue familiar to the civilised portions of mankind, made way for the diffusion of revealed truth, through the medium of the Septuagint version of the Old Testament, and prepared the whole earth to read the New Testament in its original language.

Greece became the theatre on which was performed, for the instruction of the universe, a grand experiment, the design of which was to prove how little human reason, unaided by divine revelation, could do in the discovery of truth, and to demonstrate that man, having once broken the bond of his allegiance to God, and wandered from the fountain of light and life, could never restore himself, and must be brought back, if brought back at all, by a special interposition of sovereign favour. For this purpose the Grecian philosophy arose. The scene of her instruction was well chosen, uniting all that was beautiful in natural scenery, and all that was interesting from historical association. Her apostles

were men of gigantic minds; for where shall we find, in modern times, the compeers of Socrates, Pythagoras, Plato, Aristotle, and Epicurus? The note of invitation went forth from the schools through all the earth, multitudes flocked to Athens from all parts of the civilised world. And what was the result? The apostle has summed it all up in one short sentence, where he says, "The world by wisdom knew not God. And after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God, by the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe." When reason had shown its weakness by actual experiment, then did God divulge the mighty secret which had been in his bosom from eternity. The fulness of time was now come, the time fixed upon in the counsels of heaven, the time foreshadowed on the page of prophecy, the time when the world was prepared, by the changes of four thousand years, for the grand event, and God sent forth his Son: and he by his miracles attested himself as the commissioned Redeemer of the world; by his sermons rescued the moral law from the false glosses which ignorance and corruption had thrown over it; by his life gave an example of the beauties of holiness; by his death upon the cross, offered a vicarious sacrifice for the sins of the world; by his resurrection, declared himself to be the Son of God with power; and by his ascension, poured out the Holy Ghost to apply the benefits of his death, and sanctify the hearts of men. The death of Christ was the central part of the divine administration; everything, from the beginning, had looked forward to it, and all things, to the end, will look back to it. The Roman empire had now swallowed up the Grecian, and had become more extensive than

any which preceded it. Its fine roads opened a communication through its provinces to the ends of the earth, while its unity afforded facilities of communication between country and country, never before possessed in so great a measure. The apostles, having received their commission to preach the Gospel to every creature, sped along the Roman ways with the ministry of reconciliation and the glad news of salvation. The Spirit of God was poured down upon their ministry: churches were planted; the Scriptures of the new Covenant were written, those immortal words which are life and spirit; they scaled Olympus, and drove from their seats the conclave of gods and goddesses, with which an elegant but polluting mythology had peopled its heights, and then trampled to the dust the splendid material representations of those abominable mockeries of the Deity. Mightily grew the word of God and prevailed; till, at the conversion of Constantine, Christianity was at the same time established and corrupted. At length, when the seed of the kingdom had been sown over a great part of Europe, a long wintery season supervened under the rise, growth, and prevalence of Mahometanism in the east, and the tyranny of Popery in the west. Centuries of tempest, gloom, and sterility rolled heavily along, until the revival of letters, and the invention of the art of printing, showed glorious and gladsome symptoms of returning spring. Then God gave first Wycliffe, and afterwards Luther, that greatest of uninspired men, the thunder and lightning of whose eloquence shook down to the earth the third part of the colossal fabric of Popery, and cracked and unsettled all the rest, beyond the power of popes, cardinals, and monarchs to repair it. Events now followed in rapid

succession, all closely connected with the moral culture of the world, and powerfully influential upon it. The discovery of the polarity of the loadstone, and the invention of the mariner's compass; the disclosure to Columbus of the new world beyond the Atlantic; the discovery of the passage to the East by the Cape of Good Hope; the establishment of the British power in India; all are leadings of Providence connected with the illumination, sanctification, and salvation of the human race. The puritans and nonconformists planted the tree of religious liberty: Whitfield and Wesley roused the spirit of piety which had lain down to take inglorious slumber in its shadow. By the hand of Robert Raikes, God gave us the Sunday-school system; by Carey and Bogue, the Missionary Society; by Bell and Lancaster, the improved schemes of popular education; and by Joseph Hughes, the Bible Society.

Nor ought I, in this survey, to omit that event, the greatest in modern times, whether we consider its influence on the politics, the commerce, the civilization, or the religion of the globe, I mean the independence of the United States of America. In this stupendous political phenomenon, we have seen the rapid expansion of a colony into a sovereign state, which has acquired a degree of strength, that for the period of its growth has no parallel in the history of the world. While, as a Briton, I cannot contemplate but with some apprehension the amazing energies of this youthful giant, rising up to contend for maritime and commercial ascendancy with the parent state, yet, as a Christian, I rejoice with joy unspeakable, to see that great and growing nation carrying her glory and honour into the temple of the Lord; uniting her strength and her resources with ours

to establish upon earth the universal reign of Christ; and furnishing not only new territory over which the sceptre of Immanuel shall extend, but an inexhaustible supply of all the means necessary for carrying on, in every part of the world, a war of aggression upon the powers of darkness.

This is only a condensed and rapid survey, my young friends, of what God in his providence and grace has been doing for the spiritual culture of the world. All his counsels concentrate here. He is ever enclosing the great moral waste in this lower world: always opening channels for extending to the parched and desert places of the earth, the river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb: ever throwing the verdure and blooming hues of cultivation over the wilderness. Yes; he has given the world by covenant to his Son. The decree is passed, that he is to have the heathen for his inheritance, and the utmost parts of the earth for his possession: he has written it on the page of revelation: it is published to hell, in the way of defiance; to earth, in the shape of invitation.

II. We shall now consider the events which are taking place in our own time, in continuance of the great scheme of the world's moral culture. Could I have had it placed at my option, after taking a prophetic view of all ages and all nations, in what era of the world's history, and in what country, I would spend the days of my sojourn below, I should, so far as the annals of time have yet gone, without hesitation have said, "Let me live in England at the commencement of the nineteenth century." Where others hear nothing but the portentous sounds, woe, woe, woe, issuing from the

temple of the Lord; I catch many a note of joy, resembling a distant echo of the angels' song at the nativity, which makes me say, Blessed are our ears, for they hear what many kings and wise men and prophets desired to hear, but were not permitted: and where others see nothing but vials of wrath, and gathering clouds, and signs of judgment, and spectres of mischief, approaching to fill this land and all the earth with misery; I cannot help descrying a heaven brightening every moment with more glowing tints, and a scene below covered with the buds and blossoms of spiritual blessings; and instead of responding with a groan to the raven croak of despondency, I thank God and take courage. Never, so it appears to me, was there so much going on, to give interest and importance to human existence, as in the age and in the country in which we live. The mind of man, so far as his natural faculties are concerned, is going forth in new dignity, his character is expanding itself into more ample magnitude, and his religion investing itself with new power. Depend upon it, young people, you are living in no ordinary age.

1. Consider what is doing by the professors of religion, for extending the knowledge of Christ in the world. The church is awakened from the slumber of ages, and is rousing her energies and collecting her resources for some great work. Many are seeking for the lost mantles of the apostles and reformers. The spirit of primitive Christianity is beginning to be revived; and though it be, at present, with something of the smoke and crackle of a newly-kindled fire, yet we hope the flame will soon burn brighter and purer; sure I am that it will become noiseless in proportion as it becomes intense. Men are no longer disposed to class zeal for

the spread of the Gospel amongst matters of doubtful disputation; nor to take fright at the spirit of proselytism, as at a mischievous and erratic spectre, coming forth from the gloom of superstition, to disturb mankind, and to take peace from earth; but instead, to hail it as the primitive religion come down from heaven, whither it had retired for a season, and now revisiting our world as its ministering angel. Look around, and see what is doing for the best interests of man. In our own country, and indeed throughout the United Kingdom, we see the outpouring of the Spirit of God in a very remarkable manner upon the ministers of the Establishment. How greatly have piety and zeal increased in the hearts of its clergy. This circumstance forms, in my apprehension, one of the most remarkable and auspicious signs of the times. Then consider the various institutions which have been formed by the evangelical denominations for the diffusion of divine truth in the world. It is almost difficult to find any unoccupied ground, or any neglected object. The claims of missions to the heathen have been advocated, not only in meeting-houses, (to which, at one time, the subject was almost exclusively confined,) but in churches and in cathedrals; not only in places set apart for religious worship, but in the senate and the places of public concourse, in the cottages of the poor and the mansions of the rich. Nor have the humbler ministers of religion alone taken up the cause, for prelates have stood forward, as became them, to urge the demands of these truly apostolic associations of Christian zeal and compassion. Not merely have new institutions been raised up, but ancient and venerable societies, on which something of the somnolence and infirmity of years had fallen, awakened by the

stir and bustle around them, have renewed their youth as eagles, and, led by mitred heads, have gone forth into the field of labour. Profane scoffers and infidel reviewers, a numerous and a motley crew, with little in common, as Mr. Hall remarks, but a deadly hatred to religion, who formerly ridiculed the whole scheme as a bubble of enthusiasm, needing only to be left to itself to explode, finding their predictions falsified by events, and perceiving the flame of zeal burning brighter and rising higher, begin to look inquisitive and amazed, and to admit that there is something approaching to what is grand in a scheme supported by millions, and having for its object the conversion of the world. All is activity. This is truly an age of excitement. The church of Christ is really in a state of expectation. All true Christians believe and anticipate the second coming of Christ, though they are by no means agreed as to the nature and circumstances of his advent. Myriads are patiently and diligently labouring to bring on the millennium; others are studying the mystic symbols of the Apocalypse; and under the impulse of perhaps an unauthorised curiosity, are endeavouring to know the times and the seasons which the Father has put in his own power; all are either active or expectant. The very opposite of stagnancy, quiescence, and torpor, is the characteristic of this age. The exertions made have a specific character. The activity is not loose, incoherent or unmeaning, but it assumes the definite form of zeal for the diffusion of knowledge. Except in the case of a few, there is nothing wild, visionary, or romantic. It aims at a given end, by means adapted and appointed to accomplish it. The end is the conversion of men's minds, hearts, and lives, from error

and wickedness; and the means are the instrumentality of the truth and the power of God. The dissemination of scriptural principles by education and the preaching of the gospel, is the pursuit of the day. Nothing coercive, nothing secular is employed, but only the simple, rational, and scriptural efforts of instruction, persuasion, and conciliation. Such are the features of this extraordinary era.

2. I shall now direct your attention beyond the boundaries of the church, to those subsidiary influences and auxiliary circumstances, which are accumulating around the cause of missions, and which, under the direction and blessing of Providence, will assist in extending the reign of Christ. Contemplate the rapid diffusion of knowledge. Never was there such activity of the human mind as in the present day; it is urged onward in its career of invention and discovery, by a force which surprises itself, and of which none can calculate the extent or effects. It would seem as if knowledge had been accumulating for ages, like the snow upon some Alpine height, and having been lately melted by the approach of a warmer sun, was now flowing down in superabundant streams to the valleys below. Education, improved in every department, from that which trains the infant's mind to creep, to that which teaches the philosopher to soar, has given an impetus to thought, and created an appetite for knowledge, which the press, with all its millions of productions, can scarcly satisfy. Think of the rapidity with which the mind of man is now bounding onwards. "Although there are thousands of years on the record of the world, our Bacon, who first taught us the true way to investigate nature, lived but the other day. Newton followed him,

and illustrated his precepts by the most sublime discoveries that one man ever made. Harvey detected the circulation of the blood only two hundred years ago. Adam Smith, Dr. Black, and James Watt, were friends; and the last, whose steam engines are now changing the relations of empires, is scarcely cold in his grave. Illustrious Britons these, who have left worthy successors treading in their steps." Think not that the lives, and labours, and discoveries, of such men have no influence upon, or connection with, the cause of the Redeemer, or the extension of religion. There is One reigning in the heavens, who renders all that takes place upon earth, though often in ways unknown to us, subservient to the moral interests of mankind. Little does it occur to some infidel philosophers, when they are placing upon their brow the laurel or plume which a grateful and enriched nation has awarded to them, that their researches have been illuminated and guided by that very Saviour whom they have ridiculed as an enthusiast, or reviled as an impostor; and that the chief end which Providence contemplates in the triumphs of their genius, is the advancement of that cause which they despise as the wild excess of superstition.

Think upon the system of Colonisation which is now so rapidly going on. It seems, to use the words of the author just quoted, as if Great Britain is to become not only the queen, but the mother of nations. "A colony of her children, imbued with her spirit, now occupies a magnificent territory in the New World of Columbus; and although it has been independent yet for only half a century, it already counts more people than Spain, and will soon be second to no nation upon earth. The example of the Anglo-Americans has aided

the same western hemisphere to become the cradle of many other gigantic states, all free, and following like steps. In the still more recently discovered continent of Australasia, which is larger than Europe, and empty of men, colonisation is spreading with a rapidity never before witnessed, and that beautiful and rich portion of the earth will soon be covered with the descendants of free-born and enlightened Englishmen. From thence, still onward, they or their institutions will naturally spread over the vast Archipelago of the Pacific Ocean, a track studded with islands of paradise. Such is the extraordinary moment of revolution, or of transit, in which the world at present exists."* And where, we may ask, has the Creator predestined that this progress shall cease? Thus much, at least, we know, that the earth shall yield her increase, and every portion of it which can be made capable of sustaining human life, shall receive a population over whom the sceptre of Christ shall be eventually swayed. Men emigrate not merely to prepare the way for the establishment of commerce, but for the planting of christian churches and institutions. The world is filling up with human beings who (or those that shall spring from them) shall swell the shout of triumph which the redeemed of the Lord shall roll over the surface of the earth.

Consider the present extent of the British empire, especially in the East. To Britain seems entrusted the high and sacred commission of being not only the benefactress, but the evangelist of the nations; and for this purpose God has given her an empire which extends into the four quarters of the globe, and on which the sun never sets. Our dominion in India extends over

* Arnott's "Elements of Physics."

nearly a hundred million souls; and reaches from Ceylon in the south to Thibet in the north, from the Persian Gulf in the west to the borders of the Chinese empire in the east. And what can be the design of that Great Being who rules in the heavens and governs the earth, in granting us this prodigious territory, with its teeming population? Was it merely to decorate the crown of our sovereign with the rich gems of oriental colonies? or to furnish our armies with another field of military conflict, on which to gather the laurels of victory? or to enrich our merchants, by causing the commodities of the East to flow into their warehouses? or to raise the flavour of our table luxuries by the spices of burning climates, that we might import into our country tropical diseases with tropical stimulants? No, Providence has ends more worthy of itself and of us, in thus extending our power in a country so remote, and so much opposed to us in all its customs, habits, and religion. India has been conquered by England that it may be converted by England; it is subjugated by our arms that it may be blessed by our religion; our commerce and conquest have opened for Christianity a way into that vast continent. Ye senators and statesmen! who would not have us touch the idolatry of the Hindoos, lest we should rouse their prejudices, and alienate their minds, and goad them to rebellion, learn thus your error. Mistaken men! how short-sighted are your counsels, how shallow your policy! ye would defeat the very design of Heaven in giving you this vast empire. By the very means you propose to secure it ye would provoke the Almighty to take it from you. Know ye that our missionaries do more to retain India than your soldiers; and that every new convert we make

from idolatry is a new link in the chain which binds Hindostan to Britain. Learn then your interests, and give encouragement, and not opposition, to the cause of missions and the spread of Christianity in your oriental colonies. As a man and as a Briton, I have seen occasion to deplore the progress of our arms in that quarter of the world; but I have felt relieved and comforted with the hope that every ceded province would become another spot on which to plant the standard of the Cross; and in this light alone I can contemplate with complacency the towering fabric of our Eastern power. The Birmese war, viewed thus, is not without its interest and its purpose. It is a fact worthy of remark, that the branch of oriental idolatry which prevails in Birmah, is the worship of Budhu, and not of Brahma; and this is also the case at Ceylon. Now, as the latter, where Christianity is become remarkably successful, is already in our possession, may we not hope and anticipate that the converted Cingalese will take the easy journey to the ceded provinces of the Birman empire, and that a successful appeal will be made to the millions who still bow down to Budhu, by those who have turned from this dumb idol to worship the living and the true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven? In following up this train of remark, I may observe that I was much impressed with the following passage in the work of a British officer on the Birmese war: "It is really difficult to perceive where the career of our arms will stop: in the course of a year we have successively stirred up several nations against us, of whose political existence we were scarcely aware; and it does not seem improbable that ere many years we shall be invading the Chinese empire: when we were at Prome, we specu-

lated on the subject, and calculated the distance; and the Chinese themselves seem to have taken the alarm." Many a man has, without knowing it, in such hints as these, foretold approaching events; and who can say that there may not be something of uninspired prediction in this effusion of military ambition? It is not undeserving of attention that the late successes of our troops in the East have been pushing our approaches nearer and nearer to the "Celestial Empire," in one direction, by the passes of the Himalaya Mountains, and in the other by the Birman provinces. Bishop Heber was so struck with this, in his tour through the north of India, that, when in the vicinity of the Himalaya, his exultation as a christian prelate rose above his contemplations as an enlightened traveller, and amidst the sublime emotions produced by a view of the loftiest pinnacles of the globe, he found still sublimer feelings awakened in his bosom, by his discovering what he thought an easy access, by the passes of those snow-crowned summits, for our Bibles and our Missionaries into the frontier, at least, of the Chinese empire.

III. Having thus directed your attention to past and present events which either have borne, or which still bear, a favourable influence upon the world's moral culture, I go on to state to you, my juvenile friends, in what way you may give your assistance to this great work.

1. And, as taking precedence of everything else, I must, of course, mention personal and decided piety. You must imitate the Corinthian believers, of whom it is said, in reference to their exertions for the welfare of others, "That they first gave their ownselves to the Lord." Let the first offering you lay upon the altar

of the missionary cause be your own heart, renewed and sanctified by divine grace, and devoted to the love, fear, service, and enjoyment of God. Zeal, to be of the right kind, must be an emanation from piety, and not a substitute for it. Whatever you do for the salvation of others, should be the result of a deep concern for your own. Without personal religion, you can have neither right views of the cause you are labouring to support, nor deep impressions of its value, nor right motives for assisting it; your zeal will be fitful and fluctuating, and your aims low and misdirected. In the absence of repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, you will not, you cannot, be identified with the cause itself: you may touch it, but you do not embrace it; you may have a loose and exterior connection with it, but you have no vital relation to it, no real communion with it, no ultimate share in its glories and its triumphs. Without personal religion you will not grace its final procession to the skies, and enter with it into the heavenly city, the eternal abode of the redeemed; but be finally detached and dismissed from it for ever, as individuals who gave not themselves, embarked not their hearts, identified not their interests with the kingdom of Christ, and who, whatever were their motives, had their reward for all the service they did, in the feelings of exhilaration which they experienced upon earth. Let me entreat you to remember your Creator in the days of your youth. Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness for yourselves. Do not be guilty of the strange and ruinous inconsistency of labouring to send out to the heathen the knowledge of a God unknown to you, and a Saviour unaccepted by yourselves. If, through your exertions,

conjoined with those of others, any of those heathens be saved, think what a spectacle will be presented at the last day when they, the objects of your zealous exertion, shall be seen at the right hand of the Judge, crowned with glory and honour, and possessed of eternal life, while you, the instruments of their salvation, shall be seen at the left, clothed with shame and contempt, and cursed with the sentence of eternal death. Do not, for your soul's sake, do not mistake zeal in the Missionary cause for personal piety. Many then will have done God's wonderful works, for the cause of Christ, to whom He will say at the last day, "Depart from me, I never knew you." With a solicitude which I cannot express, and an energy which I would increase if I knew how, I beseech you to exhibit, in your own example, a deep concern about your own salvation, a decided belief in the Gospel of the grace of God, and a steady, spiritual, uniform regard to the claims of religion; for these alone can render you the consistent, judicious, effectual, and persevering friends of Christian missions.

2. If you would aid the moral culture of the world, you must maintain a deep conviction of the paramount importance of man's spiritual interests, and the indispensable necessity of the Gospel of Christ to promote them.

We hear from all quarters, in the present day, of the progress of mind, and of the "march of intellect;" and we rejoice in the belief, as we have already remarked, that knowledge is, indeed, most rapidly increasing: but we are also destined to hear the most false and groundless assertions of the sufficiency of knowledge to effect the renovation of the human character, and to produce the happiness of man. Depend upon it, there is now

formed a vast Missionary Society upon the principles of Deism. Its Bible is the book of nature; its expositions are education and science; its apostles are the schoolmaster and the lecturer; its patrons and supporters are the unconverted, but still liberal, and in their way philanthropic statesmen, scholars, and philosophers of the day, who profess little, and feel less, compassion for man's spiritual degradation and exposure to eternal misery. His relations to God and eternity are left out of sight, and he is viewed only in connection with the present scenes of his existence: his soul is treated as a rational principle, but not as an immortal one; the gloom of his mind is bewailed, but not the depravity of his heart; and his civilisation, but not his salvation, is the object of hope, and the end of all the schemes concerted for his welfare. These reformers and philanthropists would conduct him along a path illuminated by science, and furnished with all the decencies and comforts of life, to the verge of immortality; and there leave him to his fate, to be lost, for aught they can do for him, amidst the shades of eternal night, which close the brightest day of mere science, and sink the unrenewed mind in the gloom of darkness that may be felt. These are the men who advocate the dignity of man, and yet leave out of view and out of calculation his immortality; in the absence of which, he, at his best estate, is altogether vanity, life is a shadow, and universal history is but a dream or a tale. To enlighten the mind is all these men pretend to do; the rest, they say, with a sneer, they leave to the visionary enthusiasts, the evangelising saints, the proselyting fanatics, who are the supporters of missionary schemes. We accept the challenge; and taking up their abandoned protegé,

where their stinted mercy has left him, in the dark valley of the shadow of death, guide him onward to the felicities and splendours of eternal day.

But, perhaps, they will tell us, that they intend and hope, by the diffusion of knowledge, to make the world moral. Then I demand of them to demonstrate to me the necessary connection between knowledge and virtue. It is true that it will strip off much of the filthy, ragged, and disgusting dress of extreme poverty, and clothe the labouring classes with a more decent exterior; that it will, in some degree, raise and refine the taste, by opening sources of intellectual gratification, and thus rendering them less dependent for enjoyment on the appetites of their animal nature; and that it will produce an ambition for elevation in life; but will it ascend to the seat of moral principle, and rectify that? Will it cure the spiritual taint of our nature, and expel the venom of sin from the heart? Yea, to say nothing of a spiritual taste, will it implant a moral one? Will knowledge alone subdue the fierceness of passion, control the urgency of appetite, and enable the soul, in the hour of assault, to vanquish the potency of temptation? This is a fine theme for the philosopher to descant upon; and he may, by the magic wand of his eloquence, call up before the imagination of his enchanted audience the lovely vision of an alehouse forsaken and a lecture room crowded; of the cups and glasses of inebriety abandoned for the philosophical apparatus; of polluting publications resigned for mechanics' magazines; and of the drunkard and the debauchee charmed out of their vices by the affinities of chemistry, or moved away from their corruptions by a display of mechanical forces. But, depend

upon it that it is but a vision. If knowledge alone be sufficient to render mankind moral, how comes it to pass that in the race which it has been lately running with crime, it is so distanced by the latter as to excite the serious alarm of the community, and the most anxious enquiry of the legislature? Are our best educated people in all respects the most virtuous? Do our grammar schools and universities display the richest harvests in the moral domain? Do the court and the upper walks of society always afford that more cool and salubrious atmosphere into which virtue, when weakened and relaxed by the influence of lower situations, can most hopefully retire, to have its enervated frame braced and recruited? Are none but such as cannot read and write to be found at our horse-races, pugilistic contests, and theatres, and all the other demoralising scenes with which even this polished country abounds? And then, to go back to past ages, do the facts of history bear out the statement that an increase of knowledge is sufficient of itself to promote the reign of morality? To these I appeal. Never, except at the time of the deluge, was the world more profligate than when he who came to reform it, reformed it by redeeming it; and the most polished part of it was the most polluted. Of what nations did the apostle give us that picture, so darkly coloured, which he has prefixed as a frontispiece to his Epistle to the Romans? Not of the Goths or the Gauls. No: but of the people that reposed amidst the splendours of the Augustine age, upon the seven hills of the eternal city; and of those still more polished and philosophic men who had had their taste formed and their minds cultivated by the Acropolis of Athens, and its statues and temples, the eloquence of Demosthenes,

the dialogues of the divine Plato, and the logic of Aristotle. Let this be remembered; and the assertions of those who now contend for the omnipotence of unaided knowledge will be hushed for ever.

But our object is principally with heathen nations; and how, we ask, is knowledge to gain an entrance amongst the inhabitants of uncivilised countries? There needs a power, which nothing but religion can supply, to fix the vagrant attention, to induce habits of reflection, to resist the dominion of sense, and to silence the clamours of appetite. Amongst such people, knowledge can be introduced by nothing but religion. Christianity must open the first schools and teach the first lessons: and much as we have heard, and have been pleased to hear, of the schoolmaster being abroad, we would also speak of another, and a still more important personage, one that to the character of a teacher of youth unites the still sublimer office of a preacher of the Gospel; the missionary is abroad, and he is everywhere making way for the schoolmaster. I would say to the advocates of that system which professes to educate men only for this world, if you would succeed in heathen lands, you must apply to the christian missionary; if you send the Bible, the plough, and the loom, and the printing press will follow; and much as you may sometimes feel disposed to ridicule the missionary schemes of those whose view of human nature swells infinitely beyond the range of your low and narrow horizon, I must tell you, that although they can do your work without your aid, you can really do nothing without them.

You will not infer, young people, from anything I have advanced, that I am opposed to the education of the people and the diffusion of knowledge. Far

from it: I would make instruction co-extensive with the existence of minds to receive it, and open to the poorest of the population all the sources of information that can be put within their reach: all I am contending for is, that education without religion, that knowledge, in the absence of Christianity, will not reform the morals, build up the piety, and secure the well-being of mankind. Nor is it to be inferred from my observations that religion has anything to fear from the extension of education, or the spread of information. Altogether the contrary; it has everything to hope. It is no spirit of mischief, doing the deeds of darkness under the cover of night; and, like the wild beast or the thief, skulking from the rising sun, to awaken again to its employment when the bat takes wing and the owl is abroad. Christianity commenced its career amidst the glories of the Augustan age; started afresh in its course on the revival of letters; has been aided in its course by the art of printing; and is now travelling in the greatness of its strength, amidst the lights and improvements of the nineteenth century. "Religion," as the learned Cudworth has beautifully observed, "is the queen of all inward endowments of the soul; and all pure natural knowledge, all virgin arts are her handmaids, that rise up and call her blessed. The noble and generous improvement of our understanding faculty, in the true contemplation of the wisdom, goodness, and power of God, in this great fabric of the universe, cannot easily be disparaged without a blemish cast upon the Maker of it." Christianity loves knowledge, and often produces it where nothing else could. Like its Divine Author, when it broods over the moral chaos, it first says, Let there be light, and light follows; and

then it dwells and reigns, enshrined amidst the radiance which emanates from itself. That religion is friendly to mental improvement, and alone can, in many cases, promote it, is evident from the scenery which now is beginning to spread out around some of our missions. Let the traveller take his station on the morning of the sabbath, on an eminence overlooking some valley where the ministers of Christ have been engaged in the labours of moral cultivation; and as his eye and his mind repose upon the decent habitation, the springing corn, the budding garden; and, above all, upon the undisturbed quiet of the scene; and, as the sound of the chapel bell and the hum of schools come up to him from below, let him ask what good genius has been there, to make the wilderness and the solitary place to be glad, and the desert to revive and blossom as the rose: and let him take the same station when the sabbath is past; and, as he hears the sound of the axe, the creak of the printing press, or the hymn of the husbandman, and beholds the appearances of civilisation spreading out before him, let him ask what benefactor has been there to convert this haunt of savages into the abode of instructed and comparatively industrious men; and he will find it is Christianity: and he shall be told, moreover, by the missionaries, the well-known fact, that never till religion had impressed their converts' hearts, did knowledge enter their minds; that they would neither labour nor learn, till they became interested in the facts, and moved by the inducements of the Gospel: and that it was the wonders of the Cross and the truths of eternity that fixed their vagrant attention; and that, till they felt something of the power of these, they could not be made to comprehend, or to put forth an effort to comprehend

the letters of the alphabet. This is the testimony of facts, which the history of the introduction of Christianity into the islands of the South Sea furnishes in abundance; and it unanswerably proves that the best and the only means of civilising men, is to evangelise them; that religion, so far from being an enemy to knowledge, is, in many cases, that which alone can commence its reign, and that every advocate for the spread of information should, to be consistent, be the zealous supporter of Christian missions.

3. If you would grow up friends to the cause of missions, and the moral culture of the world, maintain a steady attachment to the great fundamental truths of the gospel, and a deep conviction of their importance. These are the very bases on which our cause rests. The religion which we are sending to the heathen is not of that loose and general kind, which is independent of all the peculiarities that belong to Christianity, and constitute its identity. The divinity of Christ, the atoning sacrifice of his cross, justification by faith, and the regeneration and sanctification of the heart by the Holy Ghost, are the truths which, under the influence of the Spirit, will convert the world. "And I," said Christ, "if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me." The cross is not merely the magnet that will draw the heathen to God and to his church, but it is that alone which will give coherence and continuance to our missionary efforts. The generation which ceases to believe these truths, or, believing them, ceases to attach much importance to them, will suffer the holy fire of zeal to go out on the altar of the Lord. God have mercy on the poor heathen, for man will have none, when, instead of the song of Moses and the Lamb, nothing is heard

from professing Christians but the chanting of "Pope's Universal Prayer!" A spirit has appeared in Christendom, clad in the robes, wearing the smile, and assuming the name of an angel of light: she calls herself Candour, and her object is, with silver-tongued eloquence, to persuade the various divisions of the Christian world to give up their bigotry, to contend no more about doctrines, but to be content with those general principles of our religion which are independent of the peculiarities of sects. Be upon your guard against her seductive arts and dangerous fascinations. She is a lying spirit; her true name is Infidelity, her proximate aim is to produce indifference to truth, her ultimate object is its destruction. Had her persuasions been listened to in former times, there had been no Christianity, no Protestantism, no dissent, now in the world; no belief, no catechism, no Bible, no martyrs, in short, no religion. Beware of this latitudinarianism; the world is full of it in this day: our daily journals, our periodical literature, our fashionable poetry, our popular novels, are all saturated with it. I call you, young people, to first principles, and to the importance of religious doctrine. The articles of the evangelical creed are the germs of the world's future interests. I am not frightened by the ridicule of scoffers; I am not deterred by the dread of enthusiasm, from expressing my conviction that the secret of the world's moral and intellectual renovation, the panacea for its evils, lies compressed in that one expression of the apostle, "It is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners;" and that the great lever which will raise the world from its degradation, is what Paul has stated as the mainspring of all his energies,

"The love of Christ constraineth us." I beseech you, therefore, to "hold fast the form of sound words," to cleave to those doctrines, and cherish the deepest sense of their importance, which are embodied alike in the Assembly's Catechism, the Articles of the Church of England, and in the formularies of every reformed church in Christendom; doctrines to which martyrs set the seal of their blood; which, in every age and in every country, have received the testimony of divine approbation, in the holy, beatifying, and beneficent effects which they have produced; which are the essence of revealed truth, and without which not only will all missionary schemes be utterly abortive, but soon and for ever cease.

4. Bring to the cause a mind well enlightened and well informed on all the subjects connected with it. Let not your zeal be the effect of mere external impulse, but of deep and enlightened conviction; not a passion, but a principle; not the constraint of example, but the result of knowledge and of conscience. Be not satisfied to join the hosts of the Lord, and to move with the mass, without knowing clearly the object of conflict, studying the plan of the campaign, and being acquainted with the facilities and difficulties of the grand attack. Study the evidences of Christianity, that you may go forward with the certainty of those who know that they are spreading truth and not fables. Study the genius of Christianity, that you may perceive the adaptation to the whole human race of its doctrines, duties, and institutes. Study the pages of ecclesiastical history, that you may see in what way the kingdom of Christ has been extended in former ages. Study those parts of inspired prediction which foreshadow the coming

glories of the kingdom of our God and of his Christ; look down the vista there opened into futurity, and anticipate the coming age when the knowledge of the Lord will cover the face of the earth. Study the dispensations of Providence, and see their bearing on the moral interests of the globe. Take a deep interest in the passing events of your time, observe with a fixed and devoted attention, the shifting scenes, the varied characters, the gradual disclosures, of the sublime scheme going on in our world. I advise you not to be mere politicians; no, but more than politicians. I would have you keep your eye on that object, to which the statesman rarely looks, but to the accomplishment of which God bends all the events of time, the rise and fall of empires, the elevation and depression of monarchs, the march of armies, the progress of science, the multiplication of inventions, and the spread of commerce. I want you to stand where the rapt prophet stood, when he saw the convulsions of the earth, and the desire of all nations rising in glory above the dark confusion of the scene, to illumine, to tranquillise, to bless the world. I wish you to have your imaginations filled with visions of millennial splendour, and that deep and powerful interest in passing events, which shall connect them with the ultimate universal diffusion of truth, holiness, and happiness. And here let me recommend to you the perusal of a book, which it is almost a point of conscience with me to notice in every public service: I mean "Douglas on the Advancement of Society in Knowledge and Religion." It is a proof that there is not all the public spirit among us which there seems to be, and that this age is not yet ripe for such a production, that it has not gone with rapidity from edition to edition. That it

contains somewhat of yet impracticable theory, I admit; but who does not delight to see such a mind theorising and speculating on the best means of cultivating the moral world, instead of imitating those who exhaust the energies of their genius and fancy, to raise and emblason bubbles only to afford amusement for the idle and curious? Enthusiastic it is; but with an enthusiasm kindled by a holy fire, in a mind ardent for the world's best interests, and its coruscations, if they serve no other purpose, afford a light for more sober minds to work by. It is a book which has done me good, and which I am anxious should do others good; for it is a seed-bed of benevolent schemes, whence we may all take some fresh germs to plant in our hearts and our churches. They may call it, if they will, a romance of benevolence; yet the utmost mischief it can do, is to fill the imagination with visions of spiritual glory, which the most sober mind must wish to be real, and the sanguine will labour to make so.

5. Let all your exertions in the cause of missions not only proceed from pure religious principles, but be themselves characterized by the seriousness and spirituality of devotion. The man that sets his hand to the cause of religion touches the most sacred thing in all the universe; and if he touch it with unholy levity, is guilty of a sin scarcely less than that which brought the punishment of death upon Uzzah, when in a moment of thoughtlessness he laid inconsiderate hands upon the ark of God. I cannot help thinking that the zeal of the present age does not bear so much of the impress of piety as it should do: it is far too secular, too bustling, too noisy; it is the flight, not of the angel of the Lord through the midst of heaven, bearing the everlasting

Gospel, whose career is too lofty for the vapours and the dust of earth to settle on the plumage of his cherubic wings, no, but of a spirit of feebler power, which is only just rising from our humble level, and the first motions of whose wings raise upon itself something of the defilement of the earth. Our zeal must take a loftier flight; it must rise nearer to God its fountain, and hold its course in the bright regions of pure devotion, and the uninterrupted beams of the Sun of righteousness. I see, and I lament, much that is wrong. When I see missionary affairs taken up as a sort of religious entertainment, as a substitute for those amusements which our principles forbid us to resort to; when I see persons hastening to missionary meetings with as much frivolity as others enter the ball-room or the theatre; when I see the missionary cause converted into an arena where rival congregations contend for the envied palm of superior liberality; when I hear exertion and munificence called forth by appeals to some of the unholiest passions of human nature; when I see names blazoned, and achievements trumpeted forth, with more than pharisaic pomp and ostentation; when I see toy-shops set up, sailing parties formed, and I know not what other kind of means resorted to for getting money; when I find, in some cases, the delicacy of female modesty impaired, and the simplicity of youthful ardour corrupted; when I hear it said that money, money, money, is the life-blood of the missionary cause, as if Plutus, the blind and lame God of wealth, were the patron, protector, and support of missions, rather than the Lord the Spirit; I cannot but believe there is much yet to be done at home; I cannot but think that there is much to be put away from the church, before the church will

become the means of converting the world. Call me a reformer, if you like. I am insensible to the sarcasm, and only wish I deserved the honourable appellation. I love the cause of missions, as He can testify who alone is witness to those intense desires which are daily and nightly poured forth by me before the Throne of Grace for the coming down of the Spirit. Yes, I love the cause; and love, you know, is jealous: and jealous am I over it; with a godly jealousy I watch the holy fire upon the altar of the church, with a solicitude proportioned to the complacency which I take in it as a source of illumination to a benighted world; and to the crowd that are rushing into the temple with unhallowed fuel, I raise an indignant though feeble voice, and say, "Off, off, ye profane!

6. I mention the importance of a spirit of fervent prayer. Man is a strange and wayward being: he will either do nothing, or attempt to do everything; and, when roused from selfish indolence into activity, immediately rushes into proud self-sufficiency. We are not at all likely to do too much, for this is impossible; but to depend too much upon what we do. Our public institutions have assumed a very imposing magnitude and grandeur: we have caressed them, delighted in them, almost deified them, till they have risen into the place and received the homage of that image of jealousy which appeared to the people in the temple of the Lord. The priests who have performed their ritual, and chanted their praises, have called them the glory of the age, the hope of posterity, the morning stars of the Millennium. At length, Jehovah has testified his displeasure; has rebuked our idolatrous regard of our means, by suffering, in some institutions, schisms, difficulties, and controver-

sies to arise, which seemed at one time to indicate that the glory of the Lord had commenced its departure from the mercy-seat, was already on the threshold, and there waited to see if the spirit of prayer would prevent its departure, and procure its return to its dwelling-place. We are not yet stripped of self-dependence; we are trusting in the feebleness of our means; we are yet going forth in our own strength, and not in the strength of the Lord; we do not yet possess the simplicity and the confidence of faith. We have not enough (to use the expression of the venerable father of the minister of this place), of closet missionaries. We have preached sermons to prove the necessity of Divine influence for the conversion of the world; we have passed resolutions, declaring that we are convinced of the fact, and pledging ourselves to a more entire dependence on God; but do we act upon these resolutions? Are the public devotions of ministers, and the prayers of the brethren for the effusion of the Spirit at our social meetings, characterised by an inward desire for the conversion of the world? Does the church visibly appear in the attitude of dependence? Is there an evident looking up into heaven, as if a Divine visitant were expected thence? Are we preparing to give him room in our hearts, houses, churches? I do not mean the visible personal glory of Christ: that I expect not; for I consider that the personal appearance of Christ has been, and will be no more, till he comes in power and glory, to judge the world in righteousness: we are under the economy of faith, and the dispensation of the Spirit; and it is the Holy Ghost, the sanctifier and comforter, that I am looking for. Would to God that I could see the harbinger of his approach, the spirit of universal prayer! If you would

ascertain how much there is of this, look at your monthly missionary prayer meetings; are these crowded like the present meeting, like the meetings that will be held this week? I will not conceal that I have sometimes many trembling apprehensions respecting our cause, for I am afraid that nothing will lead us to trust in God but straits and difficulties. Young people, I feel anxious that you should come to the cause in the spirit of dependence and prayer, with a deep conviction of the importance of means, but a no less deep conviction of the absolute necessity of the Spirit's influence. Neither means nor prayer alone will lead to the conversion of the world, but the union of both will.

IV. I shall now excite your diligence, and urge forward your zeal, in this cause, by the application of a few appropriate and cogent motives.

1. Consider the nature of the cause itself. It is the greatest work in the universe, and involves everything that is grand and interesting in the destiny of man. It is the cause of the human intellect. In assisting the work of christian missions, you are lending your assistance to raise the human mind from the lowest degradation. The heathen nations of the present day are a mighty wilderness of mind, a great desert in the moral world, where even the partial but deceptive beauty once thrown over the scene by the wild flowers of genius and taste, as they appeared in the classic mythology and in the philosophical systems of the Greeks, is no longer to be seen, and where nothing presents itself but an immense extent, as it were, of sand or swamp, where millions and millions of minds are perpetually coming into existence and going out of it again, without putting forth a single intellectual energy for good, where whole

generations of rational minds are continuously perishing amidst the gloom of barbarism and the dreary desolation of utter ignorance. Melancholy spectacle! But yours is the task, the glorious, the immortal work of enclosing, and draining, and cultivating this mental waste, of sowing it with the seeds of thought, and causing it to bring forth and blossom, and of adding it to the territory of mind, from which it now seems almost entirely cut off. Your object is compassionate. In supporting this cause, you lend your aid, to break the fetter of the captive; to raise women from their degradation, and restore them to their just rank in society; to convert the bloody tyrant into the nursing father; to give sanctity to the marriage bond; to suppress infanticide, and tie up the broken thread of maternal tenderness; to save the widow, willing or unwilling, from the flaming pile; to put an end to the self-inflicted tortures of the conscience-stricken devotee; to sever the chain of caste, which binds whole tribes to insult, oppression, and misery; in short, to terminate the reign of evil for the universal empire of mercy, and to transform the habitations of cruelty into the dwellings of love. But your highest and holiest object is the spread of religion. Its great end is to make known the living and true God to those who are without God in the world, and the Lord Jesus Christ as the only mediator between God and man, to those who are without him; to proclaim the obligations of the moral law to those who are without law, and the glad tidings of salvation to those who are without hope; to introduce the Scriptures and the institutes of religion where nothing is now to be seen but orgies in which lust and cruelty struggle for pre-eminence; to spread the light, and joys, and glories

of immortality over the region of the shadow of death. All the importance which attaches to religion in any single case of a fallen but never-dying creature, belongs, of course, to the cause of missions, multiplied by as many times as there are hundreds of millions of pagans in existence.

By a singular delusion, and an injurious and ungenerous sophism, this cause has been represented as a mere abstraction of religion, which has little or no direct bearing on the present interests of mankind. We admit, indeed, that the religious part of its design is its noblest and its most beneficent purpose; but while from this source it derives a dazzling sanctity, which the diseased vision of its foes is too weak to bear, yet has it, at the same time, in relation to other things, a comprehension which neither its friends nor its foes often grasp. It includes all other schemes of beneficence in itself, or draws them along in the magnificent retinue of its benefits. It is a Bible society; for to translate, and print, and circulate the Scriptures, is its first labour. It is a Tract society; for the circulation of short addresses to the understanding, heart, and conscience, is one of its principal operations. It is a Sunday-school society; for wherever it establishes itself, it sets up these useful institutions. It is an auxiliary to the British and Foreign School Society, by extending education over the face of the whole earth. It is a Home Missionary society; for wherever it fixes itself, it sends out its agents into its own neighbourhood to preach the gospel. It is a society for the Conversion of the Jews; for wherever our missionaries find the seed of Abraham, they seek their conversion. It is a Peace society; for its very message is an echo of the angels' song, "Glory to God in the

highest, and on earth peace and good will to men." It is an Anti-slavery society; for it diffuses that religion which teaches the principles of justice and universal benevolence. It is a Civilisation society, and a Mechanics' institute; for it is introducing all the common arts of life into the dreary wilds of barbarism. It is mercy of the most comprehensive kind, and gathers up into itself all that ingenuity has invented, or that benevolence can employ, for the numerous interests of the human race; it stands amidst the wants and woes of the teeming millions of the earth's population, a lucid, and intelligible, and noble comment upon the apostle's words, "Godliness is profitable for all things, having the promise of the life that now is, as well as of that which is to come."

2. I remind you of the advantages which you possess for the promotion of this cause. "Other men have laboured, and ye are entered," or about to enter, "upon their labours." You cannot be ignorant of your circumstances, nor unacquainted with your privileges. You live in an extraordinary era, and ought not to be behind your age. You must not be torpid while all around you is vitality, nor inactive amidst prevailing energy. A young person that has no sympathy with the public spirit of his time, no benevolent sensibilities, no yearnings of heart over the miseries of mankind, no missionary glow, no holy ambition to leave the world better than he found it, is one born out of due season; he is a relic of an age which we have no anxiety to remember, and is a dishonour to that in which he lives. Concentrated in your possession are not only all the advantages for doing good which had come down to your parents, but all which they have prepared in addition. What a train

of labourers have been in the field, and what a collection of implements have they raised with which to carry on the spiritual husbandry! By them the Missionary Society has been formed; ignorance instructed; apathy roused; objections answered; motives applied; zeal kindled; popular affection conciliated; funds raised; habits of liberality formed; missions formed; whole tribes converted; and now you have only to support that which others have set up; to keep in motion that which they have started; to maintain in public esteem that which is already a favourite. You have the experience of your fathers to guide you; their example to stimulate you; their errors to warn you; their success to encourage you; and will soon have their monuments to admonish you. There are names so connected with the origin and history of this Institution as to have become most dear to the hearts of its friends, names which we trust will never be withdrawn from it, as long as any remain that bear them: we hope that the Bogues, the Wilkses, the Burders, the Waughs, the Hardcastles, and the Hankeys, of many generations, will be with it, and that the Society will go down to posterity as the heir-loom of their families; but if the descendants of those men whose memory will ever be precious should not inherit the zeal and the brightest honours of their sires, God's cause will not want supporters, but assistance will come to it from other quarters.

3. The transmission of the missionary cause to posterity, so far as instrumentality is concerned, depends on those who are now rising into life. This is a most solemn reflection, and presents you with a view of your accountability, which is enough to make the stoutest heart to tremble. Your fathers received religion from their

ancestors, and taught it to you; and you, receiving it from them, are to hand it forward to the next generation. As it respects personal religion, unless you cultivate it in your own heart, you will not, of course, be very likely to inculcate it upon those who are to come after you: and so also of missions to the heathen. Soon, very soon, this sacred cause must pass from the hands which now sustain it. Another of the veteran band of those who planned the Society has fallen: he whose athletic frame rose like a tower of strength in the midst of us, as the emblem of his noble mind: and whose hoary head reflected upon us, as from a bright crown of righteousness, its holy beams; the venerable and venerated Waugh has fallen; his fascinating eloquence is hushed; his eye, where intelligence dwelt with benevolence, is closed; his pleasant wit, that played, as beautiful and as harmless as summer evening lightning, is quenched. He whose prayers raised us so near to the throne of grace, and whose appeals so warmed our hearts with love to man, is gone. Others are "just ready to depart;" the chariots of fire and horses of fire, which are to carry them to the skies, are advancing; may you find their mantle, when they shall have ascended to their seats of immortality. The missionary cause must soon be left as their legacy to you. Precious and awfully responsible will be the trust. If the genius of civil and religious liberty were to confide to your keeping the great Charter of English freedom, and the Act of Toleration; and if you, by any lukewarmness, carelessness, or neglect, were to yield up those sacred deposits to the encroachments of the tyrant and the inquisitor, would you not be justly chargeable with all the enormous cruelty and degradation which, age after age, would soon

accumulate upon posterity, as its generations came into existence only to sink under the iron yoke of slavery? Would you not deserve all the execrations of the millions whom your criminal apathy would have thus doomed to thraldom? But a still more sacred cause is about to be committed to your hands, a cause which, so far as instrumentality is concerned, involves the intellectual and moral, the temporal and eternal destinies of the globe. By what idea shall I conceive, or by what language shall I set forth, the nature and extent of your accountability? You are most critically placed, between the past and the future; receiving the accumulated fruits, privileges, and advantages of all past ages, that all future ones may receive them through you. It is for you to send forward the stream of life, or to say, "Hitherto shalt thou go, but no farther." Will you, can you, dare you put out by direct opposition, or suffer to go out by neglect, that flame which is kindled to be the hope of all nations and all generations? The sacred fire upon the altar of Vesta was considered of such consequence to the prosperity of Rome, that the extinction of it was deemed a prognostic of the greatest calamities to the state; and the priestess, through whose want of vigilance the mischief was occasioned, was subjected to the most cruel punishment. The fire that now burns on the altar of the missionary cause has infinitely more than all the importance which was fabulously attributed to the flame of Vesta; the British nation, the whole of Christendom, the church of God, and the universe itself, are interested in its preservation; and its extinction might be mourned with a groan as deep as that which Milton speaks of as having been uttered by Nature after the fall of man. Of this fire you are soon to be

the appointed guardians: and if, through your neglect, it shall go out, the curses of ruined millions, confirmed and sealed by the frown of indignant heaven, await you.

And now, young people, I most solemnly and affectionately admonish you to come forward, if you have not, and to go forward, if you have, in this great and noble cause, which is your duty, your honour, and your happiness. How can you so well employ the ardour of youth, the energies of strength, the glow of health? Give the days, the aspirations, and the activities of the season of hope and of enterprise, to the service of God, and the interests of the world. "Now, now is the acceptable time." Begin life by appropriating a part of every year's income to the work of converting the heathen. Lay the first fruits of your property on the altar of the Lord. Give your personal exertions, so far as you can do it without encroaching on that time which belongs to others, or impairing that blush of modesty which is your own ornament and beauty. But are there none of you, whose hearts being renewed by divine grace, and constrained by the love of Christ, whose compassion for immortal souls, being moved by the petition, "Come over and help us!" which is floated on the wings of every breeze, and borne on the crest of every wave, which touches the British shore, are fired with the ambition to make Christ known, where he has not been known before? Are there none willing, this day, to consecrate themselves to the work of a missionary? Shall war, shall commerce, shall science, never lift their voices in vain, when they ask for agents? Is hallowed ambition, aspiring to deeds of noble enterprise, extinct or dying in the church of God? Is not

life short, time uncertain, death at hand, eternity about to disclose its realities; and are there none of you who, moved by these considerations, will seize the honour of employing the short period of your existence below, in the truly immortal work of converting earth, and peopling heaven with holy and happy beings? Need ye the power of heart-stirring example? Let me refer you to Henry Martyn. Behold him, when the united wreaths of literary and scientific fame were still unwithered on his brow; when the road to preferment was opening to his eyes; when the ease, comforts, and elegances of life were within his reach, or ready to come at his bidding; surrendering all to bear the cross to distant lands, and plant the life-giving symbol amidst the scorched plains of Hindostan. But a costlier sacrifice still did he make, costlier than the attractions of his native soil, than the fond endearments of two sisters, to whom he stood related as the Lazarus to the family at Bethany; for one there was to whom, above all others upon earth, his heart was bound by the ties of virtuous love, and with whom it would have been little sacrifice even to quit the land of his birth; and yet even her did he give up, to go alone to the other side of the globe, for the love which he bore to Christ, and to the souls for whom Christ died. This is the loftiest instance of self-denial for the cause of the Redeemer, next to that of actual martyrdom, with which I am acquainted, and affords an instance of the true moral sublime, which has but few parallels. Do you think he now regrets the sacrifices he made? O, no! Could he rise from his grave at Tocat, lowly as his own meek and gentle spirit, and visit you in person this night, he would address you in language similar to this:

"Holy and generous youth, the career of a faithful missionary is the high road to immortal renown. I regret not my decision to quit the land of my nativity, nor look back with regret upon the surrender of so many comforts for the cause of the Redeemer, short as was my course, for I now see that a year spent in India is equal to an age in England." Will no one reply, "Here, Lord, am I; send me?"

Parents, I now turn to you. How can we expect to see the ardour of missionary zeal in your children, unless proper means are employed by you to kindle and support it? If your sons and your daughters grow up without the fear of God, if they become gay and worldly, if they acquire a taste for the amusements of the world, if they become the companions of fools, we can neither expect nor wish them to be the agents of such a cause as this. It is only as they remember their Creator, live under the influence of decided piety, and cherish a deep concern about the salvation of their own souls, that anything can be looked for from them, in connection with the schemes of christian benevolence. Let me, then, become the advocate of your children's souls, of your own comfort, of the permanence of our churches, and of the cause of missions, by entreating you to pay more attention to the religious education of your families. On this basis, in a considerable measure, rests our cause. I do fear that this great and important branch of our duty is most criminally neglected, or very carelessly performed, in the present day. The culture of the heart is sacrificed to the culture of the mind, and to prepare their children to shine as people of the world, is far more the object of ambition with many professors of religion, than that they should reflect in the church

the beauties of holiness. The education of our youth is radically defective where religion is not the first and main concern. But are not, with most parents, accomplishments everything, and character, especially religious character, nothing? The spirit of the world has made, and is still making, sad encroachments upon the spirit of piety. Who can wonder, when we look at the relaxed discipline, the fitful and irregular devotion, the neglected instruction, of some families, that the young people who are trained up there should prefer the concert, the convivial party, or the theatre, to the sermon, the prayer-meeting, or the committee room? I call you to religious education, to constant, anxious, and consistent effort, to train up your children in the fear, nurture, and admonition of the Lord. Then fan the spark of zeal in their breasts; set them the example in your own conduct. What can be expected from those young people who never hear a word from the lips of their parents, nor see in them an action, which reminds them that there is such an institution in existence as the Missionary Society. Deep and indelible shame attaches to those who, in training up their children, do not endeavour to implant public spirit in their hearts. Mothers, I charge it upon you to breathe a feeling of zeal and compassion into those minds which are opening their infant capacities, and spreading their budding energies to your influence. Fathers, I admonish you to train up your sons for this cause. Where did the Roman youth gain that love of their country, which burst forth into such a flame the moment they stepped on the great theatre of their country's glory? The daughter caught it from her mother, when she heard that mother talk of her husband, who was absent in the field or the camp; the

son caught it when he saw his sire return from the field of conflict, hang up the shield and sword with which he had fought the battles of the commonwealth, and receive the kiss of conjugal love upon his honourable scars. Ah! then did the youthful bosom acquire the feeling of patriotism, when the domestic circle heard of the glory of Rome, and the duty of every citizen to brighten and perpetuate its great and sacred name. "I am weary," said a matron of that high-spirited people, "of hearing my sons called the children of Cornelia; when will they do something which will make me proud of being called the mother of the Gracchi?" Christian parents, are not these children of the world wiser in their generation than the children of light? Imitate them, only in a better cause, and upon better principles. Be the kingdom of Christ that to you which Rome was to them; and towards the object of your zeal, let there be the same patriotism, the same devotedness in your bosom, that there was in theirs. Domestic piety is the source of missionary zeal. And should God call you to make the honourable sacrifice of giving a son or a daughter to the cause of missions, withhold not, grudge not, the costly offering. Many years ago, when I formed an auxiliary society in my own congregation, and was receiving the names of the contributors, there came a youth of sixteen, who, upon being asked what he wished to contribute, modestly replied, "Myself!" I took him under my protection, watched him, taught him, and upon perceiving in him the germs of piety and genius, was willing to encourage his views. But a difficulty was in his way; he was the oldest son of his mother, who had been lately left a widow, in narrow circumstances, to struggle for

eight young children, of whom Joseph was her nearest and her strongest hope. Upon being consulted as to her willingness to part from a child so good, so promising, and likely so soon to be her support, "Let him go," she replied, "and God will provide for me and my babes; for who am I, that I should be thus honoured to have a son a missionary to the heathen?" He went, and nobly fought, and nobly fell, on the plains of Hindostan, in conflict with the powers of darkness, and in his last moments exhibited a scene of Christian triumph, the glory of which has rarely been surpassed, except at the stake of the martyr. Soon after this, another of the same family desired to follow the footsteps of his brother! What! another of her children? How did the widow act in this second instance? Just as she did in the first. "Let William follow Joseph," she exclaimed, in effect, "though it be to India, and an early grave." God has rewarded her confidence in a remarkable manner, and provided for herself and her children. And will any of you dare to lay an obstacle in the way of a child devoting himself to the cause of God? Shall worldly parents give up their children to be missionaries of mammon, of war, or of science, and we be unwilling to part from ours for God, for Christ, for the salvation of souls? What! when it is to gain for them, not the laurel of earthly fame, but the unfading crown of life and glory, which the hand of the Lord Jesus will bestow on every faithful labourer in his cause?

In conclusion; let me direct your attention to the glorious issues and the final results of all our efforts: but to comprehend these, requires more than an angel's grasp of mind, and to foresee them, more than a prophet's range of vision. When I read the innumerable

predictions which describe the future reign of Christ, and which have never yet been fulfilled by any events that have occurred; when I contemplate the sublime and mystic symbols by which approaching events are set forth, symbols which, though to me unintelligible, appear illuminated by some concealed yet rising luminary; when I consider the magnitude and extent of the work of human redemption, for the accomplishment of which the infinite God united to himself the nature of man, and effected the great sacrifice of the cross; when I see our world selected out of God's vast domains, as the theatre on which the Deity will display all his glories to the admiration of the universe; when I behold Providence occupying thousands of years in accumulating means and instruments for the completion of some favourite design: when I recollect how many centuries this globe has been given up to the dominion of sin and Satan, notwithstanding the wisdom, goodness, and power of God; when to all this I add the prayers that have been presented, the exertions that have been made, and the anticipations that have been indulged, with a view to the moral renovation of mankind; I cannot but feel persuaded, "that there is a destiny in reserve for the children of men, compared with the glory of which, invisible though it be at present, and hid behind the clouds which envelope this dark and troubled scene, the brightest day that has yet shone upon the world is midnight, and the greatest splendour that has invested it but as the shadow of death." I do not agree with some modern interpreters of prophecy, as to times or events connected with the millennium, but I do expect for our world, dark, guilty, and wretched as

it yet is, a glory which will transcend the imagination of the most enraptured or enthusiastic intrepreter of prophetic writ: a glory which shall correspond with the closing scenes of earth and time, and the introduction of the economy of heaven and eternity. What precise relation our exertions bear to that era I know not, nor am I anxious to know. Whether our system of organization be "the plant of renown," and is raised up itself to heal and bless the world, or whether it is only to bear seed which, when much that is now visible shall have perished, shall spring up, with less of human agency and more of that which is exclusively divine, it is not for me to determine; or, to confine myself more closely to the figure of the text, what part of the labour in the moral culture of the world is assigned to us, whether we are only collecting the implements of husbandry, and cultivating a little spot or two, by way of example and encouragement; or are scattering widely the seed which others are to reap, I know not: but one thing I know, that nothing we do will be completely and ultimately lost: everything is preparing for and hastening to the harvest. Look to the end of the world; the ploughman, the sower, the reaper, will have entered; the seed will have been sown; the crop will have been matured; the harvest will have been gathered; patriarchs, priests, prophets, apostles, missionaries, ministers, with all holy men and women, of every denomination, country, and age, will be gathered together unto the great Lord of the inheritance; all shall assemble, as those who have laboured in separate parts of the same domain, who have wrought in different times, and have accomplished various but con-

curring objects; none shall boast, none complain, none shall envy; for all shall see that they have done their own work, and in its proper time; and their joy shall be, not merely the joy of men in harvest, but their felicity shall be the shout, the rapture, the mutual congratulation, and the grateful praise of the multitude, who are assembled at the jubilee of creation, the harvest home of the universe.

DISLIKE TO MINISTERIAL FIDELITY STATED AND EXPLAINED.

This Sermon was published in the "The Monthly Preacher," and was evidently prepared for the press by the Author. A note will be found written by himself.

Isaiah xxx, 9–11.

This is a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the law of the Lord: which say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophesy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits: get you out of the way, turn aside out of the path, cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us.

A wish to be deceived is a state of mind by no means uncommon. Many have made truth their enemy, and it is not to be wondered at that they are then in love with falsehood. They who have everything to fear from the light, will retire from its beams, even in those cases where darkness will only yield them a little present relief, at the dreadful expense of future happiness. The moral courage which can calmly look danger in the face, and patiently listen to the alarming report which is made by some faithful expositor of the whole affair, is what few possess. Even in reference to their temporal concerns, how prone are men when they have a lurking suspicion that things are not right, to wish to be deceived; how eagerly do they look to the bright side of their fortunes; how anxiously do they cover or diminish every unfavourable symptom; and how petu-

lantly do they rebuke or contradict the individual who has sagacity to foresee, and fidelity to predict, the gathering storm! Had they the fortitude to look steadily at the approaching ruin, had they the hardihood to endure the present distress, which a perfect knowledge of their embarrassed circumstances would bring with it, they might perhaps be extricated from these difficulties. But shrinking with fatal cowardice from the painful disclosure, they court deception for the sake of a little present ease. This was the case with the Jews at the time when this prophecy was delivered. Their national crimes were bringing destruction nearer and nearer. Their political horizon was perpetually becoming darker, and signs of the accumulating vengeance of Heaven were multiplying around them. The prophets, bearing the burden of the Lord, represented him as a holy Being, whom their transgressions insulted, and whose justice must necessarily be roused to avenge wrong. One denunciation followed another, till the people, alike unwilling to be reformed and to hear of the punishment which would come upon them for their impenitence, were anxious to change the tone of the prophets' ministrations. They could not bear the pungent warnings of those holy men; they trembled under the awful and impassioned appeals of Isaiah and his fellow-seers, and endeavoured, either by threats to silence, or by bribes to corrupt, the oracles of heaven. The holiness of God was a subject peculiarly offensive to them: hence the exclamation, "Cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us." They wanted to hear only of his mercy. They would have disrobed him of his garments of light, and silenced, if they could, the song of the seraphim, uttered in praise of his unsullied

purity. The deity they wanted to hear of was an indulgent being, who would connive at sin, and never punish the transgressor. They wished to hear no more of the rigid and harsh requirements of the law, but to listen only to the dulcet sounds of promise; they were anxious that the terrible thunders of justice should die away midst the soft whispers of mercy. They were determined to go on in sin, and therefore desired, whatever might be "right things," to hear only smooth things, and to be left to go on unmolested in their career of iniquity. Happy would it be for multitudes, if this love of deception had been confined to the Jews, if this demand for "smooth things" had been made only by them. But, alas! they have many, very many followers under the christian dispensation. The faithful ministers of Jesus Christ meet with the same reception from many of their hearers, as did the prophets of the older economy. There are not wanting in our age many who are anxious to save their own souls and those that hear them; who, in their solicitude to be clear from the blood of all men, shun not to declare "the whole counsel of God." Their aim is not to please men, but to profit their hearers; not to satisfy their taste, or amuse their fancy, or lull them into a false peace, or wrap them up in unfounded security, but to save them from the wrath to come. Hence, they are anxious to convince them of sin, and by "the terrors of the Lord to persuade" them to urge the all-important enquiry, "What shall I do to be saved?" They know that without previous conviction, alarm, and penitence, there can be no true comfort, and therefore their aim is, like that of the skilful surgeon, to probe the wound before they attempt to heal it. This many of their hearers

cannot endure; they want smooth things, not right things; they cannot bear to have their consciences roused, their fears alarmed, and their minds rendered uneasy. They wish the preacher to avoid all harsh themes, and confine himself to more agreeable and palatable topics. The persons to whom I here allude, are those persons in our congregations, who, though they attend an evangelical ministry, have never yet been converted by the grace of God, but are still living either in open sin, or predominant worldly-mindedness; who know that if religion be indeed what they hear it often described, they can make no pretensions to it; who have no intention of altering their course, and who wish, therefore, to be left to pursue it, without being disturbed by the voice of ministerial fidelity.

I. I shall state the truths which are usually obnoxious to such persons. There are many doctrines to which every faithful preacher of God's word feels bound to give ample room in his stated ministry, that are by no means welcome to many of his hearers; such, for instance, as the spirituality and unbending strictness of the divine law, the deep depravity of human nature, the exceeding sinfulness of man's conduct, the universal necessity of regeneration, the inefficacy of works for justification, and the indispensable obligation to a separation from the world: but as long as these truths are not enforced by the awful denunciations of Divine vengeance, many will tolerate them who still would more willingly listen to other topics. But it is especially the holiness of the Divine nature, which, when scripturally explained, breaks in upon the quietude, and disturbs the peace of the unconverted sinner. It is the unsufferable splendour of this glorious attribute of God, which, like

the beams of the sun falling upon the diseased and tender eye, offends and irritates. "Remove from our sight the Holy One of Israel," is the demand of multitudes. Not, however, that the purity of the Divine nature, when abstracted from the Divine government, is so peculiarly offensive to sinners. As long as the Holy One will let them alone, and not cause his purity to bear upon their interests, or interfere with their pursuits, they feel perhaps no revulsion from it; as an object of mere intellectual contemplation, or of poetic taste, it is agreeable enough; they can admire the sublimity of the seraphic anthem, and feel no alarm as they sing the celestial chorus, "Holy, holy, holy Lord God Almighty." As long as Jehovah will act like the deity of Epicurus, and retire from the affairs of men into the mysterious abyss of his own perfections, they care not how holy he is; nor how much the preacher descants upon so lofty an abstraction as infinite purity. But when holiness is made the very basis of the Divine administration; when it is made to appear in the purity of the law, in the tremendous penalties by which that law is sanctioned, in the irreconcileable hatred of God to all sin, and in his irrevocable purpose to punish it; when, in fact, that holiness is set forth in all the terrors of the retributive justice of the Governor and Judge of the universe, then it is that it wounds, and offends, and irritates the minds of many who hear the awful theme. The punitive justice of God, or his determination to visit the sins of transgressors upon themselves, is the holiness of the Divine nature in act. He could not be holy if he did not punish sin, and he could not be God if he were not holy. But, Oh! with what aversion and disgust; with what indignation and ill-will; with what clamour and

opprobrium, is many a faithful minister of the word followed through his course, because he asserts the claims and denounces the threatenings of a holy God !

The Scriptures, not only of the Old Testament, but of the New, abound with the most appalling descriptions of the Divine displeasure against sin. Not only prophets, but apostles, have revealed the wrath of God against all ungodliness of men. Yea, it is a striking fact, that He who was love incarnate; who was mercy's messenger to our lost world; who was named Jesus, because he was to be the Saviour of his people; who was the manifestation and commendation of God's love to man; delivered, during the course of his personal ministry, more fearful descriptions of Divine justice and the punishment of the wicked, than are to be found in any other part of the word of God. In some of his parables there are instances of this really terrific. What can exceed the awful scenery of the parable of the rich man in torments? Hell and destruction are there set open before us without a covering. No man can fulfil his ministry, therefore, without frequently alluding to the justice of God in the punishment of sin. No man can preach as Paul did, who made Felix tremble upon the bench, as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come; and who gave it as a description of his ordinary preaching, that he persuaded men by the terrors of the Lord, unless he seeks to alarm the fears of the unconverted by a representation of the consequences that will follow a state of final impenitence: nor without this can any one be an imitator of the preaching of Christ. But such a subject frequently calls up all the enmity of the carnal mind. To be told, not only that they are sinners, which all will admit in gene-

ral terms, but that their sins are such as to deserve the wrath of God, such as to expose them to the torments of hell, and such as will infallibly bring them to the bottomless pit, unless they are truly repented of; to be told again and again that they are hastening to perdition; to have the rod of Divine vengeance shaken over their heads: to have all the curses of the violated law analysed, and all their dreadful ingredients ascertained and announced; to have this done in their hearing, and done frequently; to be made to sit and hear their doom pronounced by anticipation, and thus to be tormented before their time; is what they cannot, and will not endure. Sometimes they will content themselves with railing at the preacher, and accusing him as taking a cruel delight in harrowing up their feelings and disturbing their peace; they will condemn him as unfit to preach to any but the profligate inmates of a prison; until, at length, unable to endure any longer his pointed addresses to the conscience, they will quit his ministry for the unctuous doctrine and pulpit opiates of some flatterer of men's souls, who is too courtly to trouble the minds or alarm the consciences of his flock. But many, whose habits or whose connections allow them not to forsake the faithful servant of God, still most fervently wish that he would not come before them clothed with terrors, and armed with the thunders of a righteous God. He is too searching, too pungent, too discriminating. He allows no loop-hole of retreat for their conscience. They too often feel the iron grasp of his hand arresting their spirits. He leaves them not at ease in Zion. They want to hear more of poetic genius; more of the painting of eloquence; more disquisition; more logical dissection of error; or,

in reference to divinity, they would have the evidences and doctrines of the Gospel treated in an abstract, systematic, theological manner; or the benevolence of God and his indulgence set forth; or the duties of practical religion enforced in a general form; or the consolations of religion dispensed indiscriminately; or they could even bear an occasional sermon on the punishment of the wicked, provided the description of the wicked man's character were so vague as to leave them an opportunity of escaping; but to hear sin so described, and character so delineated, as to perceive that they are shut up to condemnation; and then, in that situation, to have the very prison doors shaken with only the distant sound of the approaching curse; this renders them uneasy, and leads them again and again to express their wish that their minister would prophesy "smooth things," and utter deceit.

II. I shall now consider the causes to which we must trace this dislike of ministerial fidelity, and this love of smooth and delusive preaching. In some cases it is occasioned by absolute unbelief. Many who attend at places of public worship are infidels, although they do not assume the name. Whosoever withholds his assent from any portion of acknowledged Scripture, merely because it is opposed to his taste, and unfriendly to his peace, is unquestionably an unbeliever. Multitudes who admit in gross the authority of the Bible, deny it in detail. This is very strikingly exemplified in reference to the subject of future punishment. It is the cant of disguised infidelity to affirm that God is too merciful to punish any of his creatures, and that all the circumstances of his vengeance contained in the Scripture, are intended only for the very worst of guilty cha-

racters; and perhaps not even for them. Such a spirit is, indeed, scarcely a disguised infidelity, but rather unbelief without a mask. The man that can either doubt or ridicule the torments of hell is, whatever he may think, or say, an infidel; and will one day be convinced, amidst the torments of the bottomless pit, that such torments do really exist. No wonder, then, that those who have brought themselves to believe that the threatenings of divine vengeance, written in Scripture, are figurative, the poetry or prophesy of a terrific scenery, ask for smooth things, and feel offended when these awful topics are introduced into the pulpit, and made to bear with the force of realities upon the heart and conscience.

The refinements of modern society and taste lead many to ask for smooth things. It should never be forgotten that there is but one Bible; and that it is intended for the rich no less than the poor, and is as imperative in its demands upon the former as it is upon the latter. There is no respect of persons with God; before him the distinctions of society have no place. Neither the coronet, the crown, the official robe, nor the royal purple, will have the weight of a feather in the eternal destiny of their possessors. When our Lord laid open the infernal world to our view, it was to disclose to us the soul of a rich man in torments. The rich may, therefore, suffer the vengeance of eternal fire in another world, if they may not hear the description of it in this. Yet how rude and unmannerly would it be thought in many congregations for the preacher to introduce, in all its fearful gloom, in all its terrific and awful reality, the subject of eternal punishment. What a breach of taste, what a violation of all the rules of

elegant society, to mention "hell to ears polite." The curses of a violated law may be uttered in barns, or conventicles, or churches for the poor, and may fall on the rude ears of the multitude, but the doctrine and the style of those who preach in God's name to the congregations of rank, and fashion, and wealth, must be as soft and smooth as the velvet over which they are pronounced, and as tasteful and adorned as the building (classic or mediæval) in which they are delivered. How would some philosophic, literary, or affluent congregations, frown with indignation, or stare with astonishment, or sneer with contempt, at the man of God, who, with the boldness of the ancient seers, should stand up and denounce, in unsoftened language, in plain Bible terms, the wrath of God against all ungodliness. What, say they, is nothing due to the distinctions of rank, to the polish of elegance, to the delicacy of taste, to the decorum of high life? Must the same harsh doctrine be delivered to the courtly circles of fashion, and the uncouth assemblies of rustics? Must no allowance be made for station? None whatever. "Woe to you, rich," was the language of the Saviour of the world. He and his apostles made no allowance for the adventitious circumstances of society, but published the same truths to all; and so must his servants in every age. There is one common receptacle for the lost souls of the rich and of the poor; and he is the enemy of the former who conceals or softens the humiliating fact.

Wounded pride is with some the cause of a dislike of faithful preaching. To be publicly denounced as deserving Divine wrath; to be told that they are sinners to such a degree as to merit the punishment

of a holy God; to be reminded that, instead of their fancied good heart, pure nature, and blameless life, they are, in the sight of God, depraved in every faculty and polluted in every part; to be represented as unmeet for communion with God here, and for his presence hereafter; all this is so opposed to all their notions, so mortifying to their vanity, so degrading to their dignity, that they cannot but dislike it. To such a debasement they would not willingly descend; and hence their demand for the language of deceit, and the smooth speech of falsehood. What they want is to be flattered into a good opinion of themselves, or be assisted to maintain such opinion when already formed. They hate the doctrine which disturbs their self-complacency, and they revile the man who attempts to sink them in their own esteem. They do not like to have the glass of God's holy law held up before them; much less do they like to be brought by the preacher into the presence of the Holy One himself, and made to see, in the pure light reflected upon them from the great white throne, how vile they are.

But still, in by far the greater number of instances, this dislike of the truth, and this love of smooth things, is the result of painful forebodings of future misery. The persons of whom I am speaking are, in many cases, not in ignorance, as other men; they know too much of God's Word to imagine that they are pardoned, holy, and meet for heaven; and they believe too much of it to be in a state of peace. They are aware that they are living in sin; that they have neither repentance towards God, nor faith in our Lord Jesus Christ; they "know the judgment of God, that they who commit such things are worthy of death;" that, if there be any

truth in the Scriptures, for them, in their present state, there remaineth nothing but a fearful looking for of fiery indignation, which shall consume God's adversaries. Yet they secretly hope that things may not be so bad as they have been represented; that God will be more merciful than rigid divines have foretold; still, however, they are determined to go on and take their chance. They cannot, will not, give up their sin. An occasional season of repenting comes on, but temptation soon ends it, or time wears it out. Now, it is easy to conceive how unwelcome to such persons must be the uncompromising fidelity of the man who is determined to obey the voice which says to him, "Cry aloud, spare not; lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show my people their transgressions." How teasing and annoying are his discourses! How his appeals pierce the heart! He will never let them be at peace. When they have almost lulled their conscience to sleep, and quieted the stern voice that so often arouses them, the thunders of his doctrine awaken it from its slumber, and again bring its reproaches and accusations upon them. How often do they revile him as sent to torment them before their time! "O that he would be less severe!" say they; "that he would not so often touch upon the evil nature and dreadful consequences of sin; that he would less frequently conduct us to the borders of the flaming pit! Why will he not leave us to ourselves? Even if he thought we were going on to perdition, why not let us be at peace till our time comes?" Because he dare not, cannot, will not. Mercy to you forbids it; fidelity to God forbids it; regard to his own safety forbids it. He must warn the wicked, till their

salvation renders it no longer necessary, or their destruction renders it no longer possible.

III. I shall now represent the folly, the sin, and the danger of a desire to suppress the faithful voice of truth, and to be flattered with the soothing language of deceit.

1. Its folly is apparent from the consideration that no concealment of the situation of the sinner can alter his condition in the sight of God, or change the relation in which he stands to eternity. This, whatever pains he may take to delude himself, or whatever solicitude he may feel that others should join him in the delusion, remains the same. Like the ostrich, which is said, when closely pursued, to put her head beneath her wing, as if to blind herself to impending destruction, he may refuse to see or have his true situation unfolded, but the case is unaltered. Is it wise in the man who has nearly ruined his constitution by intemperance, to ask the physician to tell him that he is in good health, and is carrying on a harmless course of indulgence? Is it wise in the man who is wasting his property by neglect or extravagance, to persuade his friends to hush their reproving voice, and flatter him that his prosperity is secure? Would the deceit in the former case change the condition of the patient? or the falsehood in the latter repair the fortunes of the spendthrift? How much greater is the folly of the sinner, who, instead of turning from sin to God, through faith in Christ, and thus getting rid of his alarms by abandoning his course of sin, refuses to change his conduct, and asks for a false representation of his condition. He is walking to the edge of a precipice, and solicits those who see his danger to tell him that he is safe. Of what avail will

the sermons of the smooth-tongued preacher be to the victims of his wicked cajolery in another world? Such a ministry may blind the eyes and stupify the senses, but not avert destruction; that is advancing silently and slowly, but certainly, notwithstanding the falsehoods of the blind leaders of the blind. Theirs is not the last tribunal, nor theirs the ultimate decision. From their verdict there must be an appeal to the bar of an omniscient and holy God, whose judgment will be according to truth. Millions of sentences pronounced on character by human arbiters are perpetually revoked by Him. It is of no service, therefore, to gain the testimony of ministerial approbation, unless it is confirmed by God. Nor will it be any bar to his condemnation of any sinners at the last day, to affirm that they were flattered into a good opinion of themselves by the ministers of religion, myriads of souls are thus flattered into hell, but not one will ever gain heaven by deceit. The utmost, therefore, which could be gained by our prophesying smooth things to our hearers, would be their enjoying a little temporary ease, which would only be as the calm before the tempest.

2. The sin of this disposition is equal to its folly. It is sinful alike in its origin, its nature, and its consequences. It is produced by a confirmed and inveterate sinful habit of mind. Why does a person wish to have a false representation of his state? Why does he wish nothing to be said about his sins and their punishment? Why does he wish the demands of the law, in the way of duty, to be abated, and the terrors of its penalty softened? For this one reason, that as he is determined to go on in sin, he may be left to sin with less reluctance and remorse. He is in love with some evil course, and

he wants to be left in it without disturbance. He is set against a holy life, and he therefore dislikes to hear anything about the fruits of sin. As it is sinful in its origin, it is manifestly so in its nature, for it is the love of falsehood; a desire to confound the distinction between sin and holiness. The man who wishes the preacher to treat him as if he was in a state of safety, while he is himself conscious that he is unconverted, and exposed to the wrath of God, is guilty of the sin of calling evil good, of putting darkness for light, and bitter for sweet. His disposition is at deadly enmity with the perfection of the Divine character. The holiness of God is the object of his abhorrence; as long as this exists he cannot be at perfect peace; the rays of Divine purity, as often as they fall upon his disordered mind, must disturb and exasperate it. To him belongs the striking description of the Psalmist. "The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God." He secretly wishes there was no Supreme Being, or that he was not holy. If his powers were equal to his desires he would wrest the sword of justice from the hand of Deity, despoil the character of Jehovah of the beauties of holiness, dash in pieces the tables of his law, overturn the throne of judgment, and establish the reign of anarchy, in order that he might sin in peace, and escape the punishment of transgression. This is no exaggeration, but a sober statement of truth; for the very existence of a righteous God is, and in the nature of things ever must be, an annoyance to him, in whose mind there are combined the love of sin, a dread of its consequences, and a wish to be unmolested in his course of iniquity. Nor is this all; in aiming to suppress the voice of warning and the note of alarm, he acts the part of that

infatuated and cruel wretch, who would bribe the sentinel to be silent, when the foe is about to rush, sword in hand, into the camp, or would seduce the watchman to be quiet, when the fire had broken out at midnight, and was raging through the city. For thus saith the Lord, "O, son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore, thou shalt hear the word of my mouth, and warn them from me. When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die; if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood will I require at thy hand." Under such peril would the prophet of the Lord comply with the wishes of those who would have him keep back the words of the Most High, and comfort those whom he is commanded to alarm. His own salvation is at stake, his own eternal perdition would be the punishment of his treachery. The crime of the sentinel who betrays an army and ruins an empire by his want of vigilance, or by his treachery, is venial, a mere trifle, compared with that of a minister of religion who cries peace to the wicked, and prophesies deceit. He suffers the tide of perdition to flow in silently and slowly upon immortal souls; he suffers the enemy of souls to come in and wander at his leisure; he suffers the fires of the bottomless pit to kindle and rage unchecked, and what does he deserve? Yet those who ask for smooth things for the ear and the conscience of the sinner, are soliciting him to commit this crime and do this mischief: they are bribing him to ruin his own immortal spirit, and the spirits of those that hear him; that they may be permitted to go on quietly in sin. Little do they know, and less do they care, what havoc they would make in the eternal in-

terests of mankind, if they could have their wish, and render the pulpit an oracle of flattery and lies. As it is, the voice of alarm is not always successful; multitudes rush onwards to their ruin, notwithstanding the most faithful and repeated warnings. They are not turned back, but like the infatuated and obstinate Balaam, they force a passage to their destruction, in opposition to the preacher, though he stands, like the angel of the Lord, with a flaming sword across their path. What, then, would be the case if he stood in the very midst of the broad road, and by his soft speeches, and smooth doctrine, confirmed the habits and sanctioned the course of the multitude running to do evil.

3. The danger of such a disposition to the individual himself, is as great as its sin and its folly. The man who is unwilling to hear of approaching misery, is not likely to use any means by which it may be averted. His object is present repose, not future and permanent safety. While a person can look an apprehended calamity in the face, especially if it be a calamity which it is in his power to prevent; while he can allow himself to calculate consequences and anticipate results; and, above all, while he opens his ear to the monitory voice of disinterested and faithful friendship, and solicits the counsels of unbending integrity, there is hope of his escape. But if, through a sanguine or obstinate temper, he will hearken to no advice; if, through a dread of knowing his real situation, he will close his ears against every warning; if, through a fatal love of present tranquillity, he will listen to no prediction of coming mischief; if, through a determination to think well of his case, he rebukes those who admonish him to alter his course of action while yet he has opportunity, his peril is

extreme, and his destruction draws nigh. Such is the condition of many in reference to eternity. They are living without religion, or with only such as is absolutely delusive; they are going on every moment to the judgment of the great God, without being prepared for the interview. The minister whom they hear sees their danger, and, in faithful affection for their souls, attempts to disturb their peace, by showing them their situation. To preach smooth things to them would be to become accessory to their destruction, and he therefore sounds the harsh but seasonable note of alarm; but they will not hear him; they have made up their minds to think well of their case; they shun his advice, as well as the counsels of all those who could do them any good, and listen only to the opinions and flatteries of such as are blind leaders of the blind. Instead of wishing to know the real state of the case, their only wish is to be deceived; instead of running to the physician, their aim is to persuade themselves that they do not need him; instead of anxiously enquiring, "What shall I do to be saved?" they do not see their danger of being lost; instead of fleeing from the wrath to come, they covet to be let alone. It is only by a faithful disclosure of their situation that they can escape, but they will not hear it. Like the man whose house is on fire over his head, and who is angry with neighbours who have disturbed his slumbers and alarmed his fears, they entreat that nothing may be said to them about the quenchless fire, although it is kindling around them. They take pains to be lost, and are offended with the persons who would save them. Having changed their place of hearing the word, in order to be at ease in their sins; having left the man whose thunders were perpetually breaking in upon

their fatal repose, for one of those guilty creatures whose soft whispers lull their devoted hearers to the sleep of death, they obtain, under his soothing discourses, that which they sought—ease from the stings of conscience, and from the anticipations of judgment to come. There, indeed, they are sometimes gently reproved for the grosser irruptions of criminal appetite, and reminded to be a little more virtuous, but, at the same time, are furnished with excuses drawn from the weakness of humanity, comforted with assurances of God's indulgence to the frailties of his erring creatures, and reminded that any considerable defects in virtue may in due season be repented of, or made up, by some extra acts of charity or devotion. Conscience is bribed and deceived; from that moment, the poor wretched creature is at ease in Zion, resists and resents every attempt to undeceive him, hugs to his bosom the lie which is destroying him, lavishes his compliments and caresses upon the false prophet that is the accomplice of his soul's murder, lives in peace, dies perhaps in tranquillity, but there the delusion ends, for "in hell he lifts up his eyes, being in torments." He that on earth would not hear of his sin, now feels all its bitter consequences, when repentance is too late, and where pardon never comes at all. He that on earth reviled the faithful minister, now curses the preacher of smooth things. He that on earth could never bear to hear of the bottomless pit, is now in the midst of it. He that wished his imagination never to be terrified by the flame of the burning lake, is now tossed upon its billows. He had his wish, for he heard the tongue of flattery, and selected a miscalled minister of religion, who caused the Holy One to cease from before him, and

now he is in that horrible place, where the awful form of holiness, as it is seen in retributive justice, is the chief object that will ever be present to his astonished, affrighted, and agonised spirit. He chose rather to be flattered to his ruin than alarmed to his salvation; he has his choice, and proves now the truth of that fearful declaration, "And it shall come to pass, when he heareth the words of this curse, that he bless himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of mine heart, to add drunkenness to thirst; the Lord will not spare him, but then the anger of the Lord and his jealousy shall smoke against that man, and all the curses that are written in this book shall lie upon him."

By way of application, I infer, how great are the importance, responsibility, and difficulty, which attach to the ministerial office, and how anxious those who sustain it should be to discharge its duties with uncompromising fidelity. As to those wicked and miserable men who have taken up the ministerial office as a mere profession to live by, without any spiritual qualifications for its duties, their guilt now, and their punishment hereafter, exceed the powers of language to describe, and of imagination to conceive. They are the most sinful beings on earth, and will be the most wretched creatures in eternity. A pretender, who undertakes to conduct men's suits or to prepare their title deeds without a knowledge of law; or a person professing to be a physician, and undertaking to cure dangerous diseases, without the least knowledge of medicine; a pilot, taking the helm of a ship without any acquaintance with navigation; or a general, leading an army into battle without any experience in military

tactics, are modest and harmless characters, compared with the man who professes to be a minister of religion without a personal acquaintance with the subject: the others only destroy men's bodies or properties, but he is accessory to the ruin of their souls; and upon him will rest the blood of all those whom he has guided to destruction. That such should prophesy smooth things is, of course, to be looked for; they know nothing else; they prophesy those things to themselves, and will declare them to others. Melancholy, most melancholy, is it to reflect how many of the public teachers of religion, even in this Protestant country, are perpetually employed in the ministry of deceit; assiduously labouring to hide men's spiritual condition from their view; zealously endeavouring to suppress the anxiety produced in the souls of their neighbours, by men more faithful than themselves; exerting all their influence to keep mankind asleep in sin: thus busying themselves in the work of perdition, and, like the master whom they serve and imitate, going about as a roaring lion, seeking whom they may devour. They are mere pulpit agents of the devil, receiving the wages of the sanctuary while they do his work; keeping all still and quiet among his slaves, preventing all attempts to throw off his hateful yoke, by flattering them with the idea that they are the servants of God. But I would address myself to those ministers who profess to be experimentally acquainted with religion, and to declare with fidelity the whole counsel of God. To them I would, with great deference, suggest two things.

1. The conversion of sinners should be the chief object of every minister of Christ. By listening to the habitual strain of some good men's preaching, we should

be led to conclude, either that they had no unconverted hearers in their congregation, or they had nothing to do with their conversion. Almost everything which they utter is addressed to believers, or if an occasional appeal be made to the impenitent, it is so formal, so cold, and so general, that it is not likely it should produce much effect. When we consider that, in most congregations, the majority, it is to be feared, is composed of unregenerate persons, surely, surely, they ought to be viewed as the first object of ministerial solicitude: they will soon be gone beyond the reach of salvation; almost every Sabbath some one or other of them retires from beneath the minister's voice, to return no more. Besides, the means that are calculated to impress, convince, and convert them, are adapted to keep up in the minds of believers, a deep and impressive sense of eternal realities. Is not this justified by the parable of the Shepherd leaving the ninety and nine sheep in the fold, to go into the wilderness after the solitary wanderer? Here I will quote the language of Baxter: "The work of conversion is the great thing we must drive at; after this we must labour with all our might. Alas! the misery of the unconverted is so great, that it calleth loudest to us for compassion. If a truly converted sinner do fall, it will be but into sin which will be pardoned, and he is not in that hazard of damnation by it as others are. Not but that God hateth their sins as well as others, or that he will bring them to heaven, let them live ever so wickedly, but the spirit that is within them will not suffer them to live wickedly, or to sin as the ungodly do. But with the unconverted it is far otherwise. They 'are in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity,' and have yet no part nor fellow-

ship in the pardon of their sins, or the hope of glory. We have, therefore, a work of greater necessity to do for them, even 'to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God; that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them who are sanctified.' He that sees one man sick of a mortal disease, and another only pained with the tooth-ache, will be moved more to compassionate the former than the latter; and will surely make more haste to help him, though he were a stranger, or the other a brother or a son. It is so sad a case to see men in a state of damnation, wherein, if they should die, they are lost for ever, that methinks we should not be able to let them alone, either in public or private, whatever other work we have to do. I confess I am frequently forced to neglect that which should tend to the further increase of knowledge in the godly, because of the lamentable necessity of the unconverted. Who is able to talk of controversies, or of nice unnecessary points, or even of truths of a lower degree of necessity, how excellent soever, while he seeth a company of ignorant, carnal, miserable sinners before his eyes, who must be changed or damned? Methinks I even see them entering upon their final woe. Methinks I hear them crying out for help, for speediest help! Their misery speaks the louder, because they have not hearts to ask for help themselves. Many a time have I known that I had some hearers of higher fancies, that looked for rarities, and were addicted to despise the ministry, if I told them not something more than ordinary; and yet I could not find in my heart to turn from the necessities of the impenitent, for the humouring of them; nor even to leave speaking to miserable sinners

for their salvation, in order to speak as much as should otherwise be done to weak saints for their confirmation and increase in grace. Methinks, as Paul's 'spirit was stirred within him, when he saw the Athenians wholly given to idolatry,' so it should cast us into one of his paroxysms to see so many men in the greatest danger of being everlastingly undone. Methinks, if by faith we did indeed look upon them as within a step of hell, it would more effectually untie our tongues, than Crœsus's danger did his son's. He that will let a sinner go down to hell for want of speaking to him, doth set less by souls than did the Redeemer of souls; and less by his neighbour than common charity will allow him to do by his greatest enemy. O, therefore, brethren, whomsoever you neglect, neglect not the most miserable! Whatever you pass over, forget not poor souls that are under the condemnation and curse of the Law, and who may look every hour for the infernal execution, if a speedy change do not prevent it. O call after the impenitent, and ply this great work of converting souls, whatever else you leave undone."

2. If, then, the conversion of the impenitent be the first object of ministerial solicitude, this must be sought by suitable means. The means for awakening the unconverted are of course various; some are wrought upon by one truth in the hand of the Spirit, and some by another; and, perhaps, most ministers have sometimes been surprised by finding that discourses have been rendered beneficial for the rousing of the careless, which, in their purpose at the time, were neither specially adapted nor intended for this object. But I am speaking now of the means which, to our view, appear generally most adapted to awaken attention, produce

impression, and lead to conversion. On this subject I do not hesitate for a moment to give it as my opinion, that what may be called the alarming style of preaching is most adapted to convert the impenitent. I do not mean gross and revolting descriptions of eternal torment, nor the carrying out into minute detail what may be called the material and corporal representations of the punishment of the wicked. This is offensive and disgusting, and generally defeats its own purpose; especially when done, as is often the case, in a harsh, cold, and unfeeling manner. What I mean by alarming preaching is an exhibition of the purity and unbending strictness of the law, together with such a method of applying this strict rule to the heart and conduct of the individual sinner, as is calculated to awaken and startle his conscience; a faithful portraiture of the heinousness of sin, stripped of all the excuses which our deceitful nature is so skilful in framing for its defence; a careful discrimination between mere reformation and a renewed heart; the indispensable necessity of regeneration, and the absolute certainty that every man will perish who dies without it; a solemn manifestation of the immaculate holiness of God, and of his retributive justice in the punishment of the wicked; an impressive description of the solemnities of judgment, together with a chastened but awakening account of the torments of those who reject the sacrifice of Christ, and refuse the offer of mercy. These are the subjects, explained and enforced in suitable language, with close application to the heart, pungent appeals to the conscience, and with an affectionate, earnest, solemn manner, that are likely to arouse the careless and convert the sinner. I do not mean, of course, that we should make such topics the incessant

subjects of our ministerial addresses. A perpetual denunciatory strain would at length render those for whom it was intended carelessly familiar with the terrors of the Lord. The timid would come at length to listen to the most appalling tempest without alarm, if it always thundered. But what I mean is, that while a minister's habitual strain of preaching should be so discriminating as to leave no unconverted sinner at a loss with whom to class himself, whether with believers or with unbelievers, it should not unfrequently contain those allusions to, and descriptions of, the wrath of God, which like the distant rumblings of the gathering and approaching storm, should drive men to the refuge provided by infinite mercy in the cross of Christ. No one will flee for shelter who does not see a tempest at hand; and then only will the shelter be valued when the storm is believed to be coming. Hence the necessity of a minister's raising the warning voice to announce the approach of that storm of divine vengeance which is coming upon the wicked, and which, as it cannot be seen by the eye of sense, should be the more vividly described and more earnestly represented to the mind. That this style of preaching has been the most useful could be easily proved by an appeal to the history of the church. Who have been the most successful ministers of the world? Certainly those who have been most pungent and alarming.*

* Let any one read the discourses of Baxter, who seemed to speak as between heaven and hell, with the glories of one and the torments of the other open before him, and remember his success. Or let him peruse the discourses of Whitfield, which were followed with a measure of success unparalleled since the days of the apostles; what a pungent and alarming strain do we find running through them! Equally in point are the sermons of Jonathan Edwards, which were

But ministers, notwithstanding this, are under a great temptation to preach smooth things, and to shrink from what may emphatically be called the burden of the Lord. A false charity leads them, in some instances, to be unwilling to disturb the peace or distress the feelings of their hearers; or, perhaps, there are some in their congregation who may feel an objection to what they contemptuously call the harrowing style. But most of all are those in danger of compromising their duty, who are appointed to minister to well educated and wealthy audiences. We all, perhaps, feel it more difficult, even in private conversation, to deal plainly and faithfully with a rich man than a poor one; and we carry too much of this sinful respect of persons with us into the pulpit. We do not like to offend the delicacy of persons of refined sentiments and well-informed minds. Even the most pious ministers, the men not usually wanting in fidelity, are too susceptible of impressions of this nature, and are in some peril of softening the terms of their message, and, out of compliment to rank, wealth, or intelligence, merging the terrors of the Lord in elegances of style or the ornaments of eloquence. They will not, perhaps, dare to withhold the substance

the means of an astonishing revival of religion in his town and neighbourhood. The preaching of that great man appears to have been more alarming than any which we are ever accustomed to hear. And, as to modern times, may it not be asked whether the most alarming preachers have not been the most successful ones. In further confirmation of this view of the subject, I might appeal to those popular tracts and treatises which have been so signally blessed for the conversion of sinners, such as "Alleine's Alarm," "Baxter's Call," "Doddridge's Rise and Progress," &c. If the reading of these has been so useful, surely it may be expected that preaching in a similar strain would be still more so.

of truth, but in their attempts to render it palatable to persons of education, property, or talent, they will so dilute it with foreign admixtures as to deprive it of its efficacy. They will relate a parable and leave the rich man to discover and make the application to himself, instead of boldly saying, like the prophet to the monarch of Israel, "Thou art the man." Away, away, with this false, this ruinous deference to the rich and the learned; it is treachery to God and their souls. At our peril is it that we soften down the terrors of the Lord to please any man; we must not shun to declare the whole counsel of God to nobles or to monarchs, if we were to preach to them; we must stand clear of the blood of the rich as well as of the poor. Did Paul regard the feelings of Felix? No; he made him tremble upon his seat, with the themes of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come.

Nor must we suffer ourselves to be drawn away from our duty in these things by any in our congregation, whose nervous temperaments or mistaken notions may set them against a faithful and impressive exhibition of the justice of God in the punishment of the wicked. We must not, in compassion to the weak, or in compliment to the erroneous, keep back those truths which are ordained by God for the conversion of men's souls. Nor must we listen to the seductive insinuations, the selfish policy, or the spiritual covetousness of those, who would intimate that we are robbing the children to benefit the stranger. We have a message from God unto sinners, which all the saints on earth, were they assembled, must not allow us to suppress in silence. Sin is raging all around us; Satan is busy in the work of destruction; men are dying; souls are every moment

departing into eternity; hell is enlarging her mouth, and multitudes are continually descending to torments that know no mitigation and no end. Is this a state of things in which any who believe its reality can allow themselves to be flatterers? Alas! such flattery ends in death. How important and incumbent is it that all who hear the Word of God, should be willing to hear it fully and faithfully delivered.

A word of admonition is here needed for two classes of professing Christians. Are there not many who are dissatisfied with everything but words of comfort and statements of privilege? They object to everything of a searching and practical tendency. Their incessant demand is for doctrine and consolation. Everything besides this is legality. This disposition is, though in a modified sense of the text, a demanding of smooth things, and is, in a measure, asking for deceit, and requesting that the Holy One of Israel may cease from before his people. Such persons value themselves as being believers of greater eminence, children in the family of God of taller stature and greater strength than others; but reasoning from analogy, one should be led to suppose that the oldest and best children would be most anxious to hear their father's command, and do their duty by fulfilling his will; for in the families of men, it is the younger and more ignorant and petulant that quarrel with commands and cry after luscious sweets. The strongest mark of great grace is to delight more than others in knowing and doing the will of God, and yet to think least of what we do. Many who boast of their high attainments in religion, would have the ministers of God leave out more than half their message; and what is this but to do

the work of the Lord deceitfully? Upon their principles, all parts of God's Word but the promises are unnecessary: they are useless to believers, for they are above them by privilege; useless to sinners, for they are below them in respect to obligation.

But there is another class of professors of religion, who are anxious that the preacher should confine himself to consolatory topics, and say little to awaken the conscience, or alarm the mind; I mean those who are but too well convinced of the inconsistency of their conduct, and the irregularity of their walk, to be comfortable under faithful, penetrating, and discriminating sermons. Many such, alas! there are, who, if not altogether hypocrites, approach as nearly as can be to that odious character. They cannot bear the searching discourses of the servant of the Lord. His warnings and appeals; his demands of the surrender of every secret sin, of cutting off of right hands, and the plucking out of right eyes; his declarations that the habitual indulgence of one known and wilful corruption, is incompatible with the existence of the christian character, and will cast the transgressor into perdition; his urgent enforcement of all the branches of evangelical obedience, are as troublesome and annoying to some that call themselves Christians, as vinegar to a fresh wound. They shrink from his descriptions of the distinguishing marks of true and false professors; they tremble at his denunciations of Divine vengeance, and vent their spleen in angry reproaches upon his legality. "We ask for bread," say they, "and he gives us a stone; for an egg, and he gives us a scorpion; we want comfort, and he gives us distress; promises, and he denounces threatenings; the

felicities of heaven, and he describes to us the torments of hell." Hypocrites! he gives you that which belongs to you. To prophesy smooth things to you would be to corrupt his message, and to comfort those whom God would not have comforted. Consolation to you would be a deadly poison, a fatal opiate. You must forsake your sins, or what have you to do with peace? He must bring you nearer to the Holy One, that you may see more clearly still your vileness. The most appalling denunciations of Divine vengeance are necessary for you. Thunders louder and more dreadful than those that are rolled over the conscience of the men that make no profession, are necessary for you, you unsound professors. You have heard ordinary storms so often, that you can sport with thunderbolts. If you rightly understood your own case, you would deprecate smooth things, dread the language of deceit, and ask for plain dealing and faithful admonition. Your peril is extreme.

It is not uncommon for even consistent Christians, who have only the ordinary imperfections of even the best men, to wish to hear less of the alarming parts of divine truth. "We want comfort," say they; "we are at peace with God; to us he comes not in the earthquake, or the tempest, but in the still small voice." Be it so. But have you no compassion for others, no concern for their salvation? Besides, can you not, while the tempest is abroad, and the storm is passing by, lift up your heart in gratitude to God, that you have found a shelter? And, after all, are there no imperfections yet to be put away from you, no defects yet to be supplied which require the voice of alarm sometimes to be sounded in your ears? Who can tell but this may be necessary for keeping you awake? Cordials, emollients,

and delicacies may not do for a continuance for your moral constitution: something more pungent and painful may be occasionally necessary. It may be good even for you, sometimes to rejoice with trembling. A blast of the trumpet, at which Moses said, "I exceedingly fear and quake," may prevent the progress of a fearful lethargy which had begun to creep over your soul. Innumerable Christians have derived unspeakable advantages from the alarms that have sounded from Zion's hill, and have returned to buckle on their armour afresh, and to go forth with renewed strength to the good fight of faith.

Let those who cannot bear to hear the descriptions of future punishment, think with themselves how they shall be able to endure it. There is every reason for believing that they who demand smooth things and deceit from the preacher, are the very persons who are going on to suffer the vengeance, to the description of which they cannot be made to listen with patience. Why those alarms and terrors, those painful forebodings, those dreadful apprehensions? Ah, why? Do they not disclose the secrets of a mind aware that if it continue in its present state, it has nothing else to look for but the wrath to come? "The sinners in Zion are afraid, fearfulness hath seized the hypocrites!" But why? Because their awakened and terrified conscience exclaims, "Who among us can dwell with everlasting burnings? Who can dwell with devouring fires?" Yes, that unutterable aversion and irreconcileable hatred to the subject of future punishment, which makes them dislike the preaching and the preacher that bring it before them, too plainly indicate the state of their mind: it is like the malefactor not liking to hear the descrip-

tion of the gallows, or the palpitation of the offender, as he passes beneath the gloomy and frowning portals of the prison; virtuous citizens have nothing to fear from either. Take warning, sinner, from this simple fact. Let your own feelings be your monitor. Ask yourself the simple and natural question, why you tremble at the denunciations of Divine wrath against transgressors; why you should wish the seers to prophesy deceit and lies.

And, then, if the very report of approaching vengeance makes the ear to tingle, what, O! what will be the dread reality? All that the most eloquent, the most impassioned preacher can say of the wrath coming upon the wicked is infinitely below the mark. It is only as the description of the most exquisite tortures that were ever inflicted by fire or sharp-edged instruments upon the human frame, compared with the endurance of the horrible agony. Assemble all the threatenings and the curses that the finger of justice has written in the sacred volume; associate all the figures under which the torments of the damned are set forth in the Word of God; array all the terms of indignation and vengeance which can be selected from the page of inspiration; add to these all the passages of that lurid eloquence of man which seems irradiated with the reflection of infernal fires, and vocal with sounds that escape from the bottomless pit; and what is it, after all, compared with the reality of future punishment, but as the mere pencil representation of the deluge, compared with the real horrors of that most amazing scene of infinite wrath? Oh, no; there is in that one word—Hell—a depth, and length, and breadth of meaning, which nothing short of actually suffering the vengeance

of eternal fire can enable us to understand. These terms are too weak to convey to us adequate ideas on this subject, and therefore figures are employed; figures are too weak, and visions are added to them; words, figures, and visions, are too weak, and therefore does the apostle drop all, and ask, with most alarming emphasis, "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?" With that question, I close my discourse; a question which crowds the imagination with more terrors than the most extended and appalling description, and impresses the heart with the conviction that the man who dies without repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, goes to a state of misery in another world, which is unavoidable, indescribable, and eternal.

A SERMON

TO THE

MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH AT SURREY CHAPEL,

ON OCCASION OF

THE DEATH OF MRS. SHERMAN,

PREACHED ON SUNDAY MORNING, MAY 28, 1843.

With what utterance shall I break the silence of this solemn moment, and meet the necessities and the expectations of this vast and more than attentive audience? With what sentiment shall I tranquillise their minds, calm the perturbations of their hearts, and prepare them for those services which, by the mysterious providence of God, I am called to conduct?

"Even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight."

Yes, there is enough in that one consideration, not only to repress every murmur and to produce the most entire acquiescence, but to dispose and enable to listen to the teaching, which is to be founded on one of the most afflicting events that could happen to this congregation.

It is at the request of the saint, whose decease has filled us all with grief, that I occupy the pulpit of her bereaved husband on this melancholy occasion. Such a request, backed as it was by the solicitation of your deeply afflicted pastor, my much-loved friend, could not be refused; although the occasion and the place cannot but harrow up my own feelings, and tell me, that having, like him, been called twice to drink of the bitter cup, I am fitted, at least by experience, to feel and to express the tenderest sympathy with him.

It was a proof and a manifestation of the exalted

religion of our dear friend, that she felt anxious that her decease might be rendered effectual for the spiritual benefit of the church and congregation, of which she was so bright an ornament; thus evincing a desire even to the last, that her usefulness might extend beyond the period of her natural life. I have been requested to address the Church; and I shall, by God's help, endeavour to carry out her design, and render this discourse the means of benefit to those for whose welfare she cherished so benevolent an anxiety.

For this purpose, I could think of no passage of Holy Writ more appropriate than the apostle's admonition,

Hebrews vi, 12.

That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

I might have selected a text, containing more of pathos, more of what may be called the religiously sentimental and more of what excites the imagination, and lying a little more out of the ordinary track of our reading and our preaching. But where could I have selected one which entered more deeply into the design of our deceased friend, in wishing this discourse to be delivered; a text which more powerfully appealed to the conscience; which, in one view, more aptly suited the condition of the great bulk of Christian professors, or which, in another and an opposite manner, more exactly described the example, which is this day to be held up for imitation? Blessed spirit! I should feel I had betrayed the trust so generously and confidently reposed in me by thee, if I did not seek that every syllable of my

sermon should be employed to promote the eternal welfare of the church, whose interests occupied thy thoughts in the hour of separation, and in the dark valley of the shadow of death!

Can I, my dear hearers, members of this church, more effectually promote your spiritual well-being, than by endeavouring to rouse you from slothfulness, if that be the state of your hearts, and excite you to give all diligence by a renewed exercise of faith and patience "to make your calling and election sure?" Is it not surprising, that with the promise and the prospect of glory, honour, immortality, and eternal life, with heaven expanding above us, hell yawning beneath us, and eternity opening before us, and, at the same time, with a professed belief of the truth and reality of all these stupendous objects of faith and contemplation, we should need such an admonition as that contained in the text? It might have been supposed, (did we not know what human nature is,) that with such scenes present to our minds, it would be difficult to keep our thoughts sufficiently abstracted from them to pursue the ordinary callings of the present world. How astounding is it sometimes to ourselves, that, favoured with a certain, though distant, view of the celestial city, living almost within the sight of its glories and the sound of its music, the low cares and the little enjoyments of the present world should have so much power over us, as to retard us in our heavenward course, and make us negligent and indolent, unwary and forgetful; and especially that the departure of our friends to the regions of immortality should not of itself be sufficient to render it unnecessary to admonish us to set our affections on things above, "where Christ sitteth on the right hand

of God!" My dear brethren, "these things ought not so to be." Time is short, life uncertain, death at hand, and immortality about to swallow up our existence in eternal life or eternal death; listen then, this morning, to the united voice of Providence and Scripture, which now says, "Be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises."

I. First, the text informs and assures us of the state and happiness of departed saints. They "inherit the promises."

The apostle Peter beautifully spoke of the "exceeding great and precious promises," which are given unto us in the gospel of the grace of God. Another of the apostles has summed them all up in one: "this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life." In the infinite comprehensiveness of that one assurance are included all that the omniscient mind of the Father in the exercise of his love has contrived in eternity, all that the incarnate Son has obtained by his sacrifice upon the cross, and all that the Divine Spirit has revealed upon the page of Scripture, and all which is contained in that one majestic, inconceivable, and expressive word, heaven. I want not florid descriptions and eloquent representations of the celestial state, to raise my desires and hopes; it is enough to know that it is glory, first prepared, then promised, and ultimately bestowed by Jehovah, as the concentration of his infinite beneficence and the full manifestation of his boundless benevolence. It is the absence of all evil, natural and moral; the possession of all possible good; a glorified body united with a perfect soul, and all this in the immediate presence of God, and in the elevating society of the spirits of just men made perfect and the innumerable company of the

angels. There we shall see God; not only see him, but love him; not only love him, but serve him; not only serve him, but enjoy him; not only enjoy him, but hold such communion with him as will assimilate us to the all-perfect source of our felicity. The objects of our contemplation, our situation, our society, our personal constitution, our constant exercises of intellect, heart, and volition, will be so many distinct sources of bliss. Perfect knowledge, perfect holiness, and perfect love must of necessity open the fountain of perfect joy. No secondary concern will call off our unwearied attention from the service of God; no sin or pain will interrupt us in it; nor will death ever dismiss us from it. The business and the blessedness of that happy state are the same; our supreme delight will be our constant employ. Every sense will be an inlet, every faculty a capacity, and every energy a pulsation, of the purest bliss. It will be "Life," life in perfection, the life of the soul, the life of God, the life of heaven, the life of eternity.

But to describe it, how vain and arrogant the attempt, when even to conceive of it is impossible! "In thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore:" neither language nor thought can go beyond this. Mind cannot conceive more. God himself can tell us no more, than that heaven consists in his presence, and the enjoyment of his favour, for ever and ever

> "To fly as on a cherub's wing;
> As with a seraph's voice to sing:
> Performing with unwearied hands
> A present Saviour's high commands."

Such is the state on which the saints who have left our world have entered; such the happiness which they

possess, or which, indeed, rather possesses them. They "inherit the promises." The apostle speaks of it as their actual condition, their present position. So much of it as they can receive before the resurrection of the body, they already have received, even now while their bodies are slumbering in the grave. A representation utterly inconsistent with the idea of the insensibility of the soul: a dogma no less unscriptural and unphilosophical than it is unwelcome. For them "to depart" is "to be with Christ;" and to be "absent from the body" is to be "present with the Lord."

Wherefore comfort yourselves, ye mourners in Zion, with this blessed thought. Could you see the dear objects of your affection now, and contrast the pale and wan and wasting bodies, to which it was your painful privilege to minister through "wearisome days and months of vanity," with the angelic forms that now they wear; could you contrast with the agony in which by sympathy you had such sad fellowship, the seraphic rapture which they now enjoy; would you not, in beholding their happiness, forget your own sorrows? It was your study and your delight to make them happy while they were on earth; yet even with all your love, you could, through the ills of life, but imperfectly succeed; the Lord has finished your labours of love, and has himself undertaken to make them perfectly blessed. He saw that he could do this in no other way than by removing them into his own presence; will you complain, and wish them back again amidst the sins and the sorrows of this imperfect world? Would you, if you could, for your own comfort, draw them down from their elevated seats of glory to this low sphere of earth-born care and daily trouble? Rest, ye happy spirits! and

let it be our wish, our effort, and our prayer, not to have you with us again, which is impossible, but to join you in that realm of unclouded glory and perfect bliss.

II. Let us now consider the instrumentality of "faith and patience" in forming the saints for their heavenly inheritance.

With our knowledge of the word of God, and our own practical experience, we can be at no loss to discern this connection. It is revelation, and not reason, that informs us there is a future state of glory for the believer. While to the heart yearning for immortality, and to the intellect straining its vision to catch even some faint and distant glimpse of it through the darkness of the tomb, philosophy holds out only her dark lantern of conjectural speculation, the Bible presents, in glorious radiance and assured reality, this grand desideratum of our dying race. To the eye of faith, a hand, infinite and divine, unrolls the page of eternity, on which things heavenly and immortal are pencilled by sunbeams. The humblest believers in the gospel, the pauper of the workhouse, the Lazarus at the gate, the poor but heaven-taught Sunday scholar, refresh their illuminated and regenerated spirits on the bed of death, amidst the commingling sufferings of disease and poverty, with thoughts which Plato never imagined, and Tully never taught; with descriptions of the paradise of God, drawn by the infallible pen of inspiration in colours of light and life. Oh! ten thousand thousand thanks to thee, thou God of revelation, for this blessed book, which sheds lustre upon the tomb, and raises the visions of immortality over the dark valley of the shadow of death!

It is by faith that the soul of the convinced sinner applies to Jesus Christ for justification, and rests upon

the merit of his atonement and righteousness as the sole procuring cause of his salvation. Turning away from every other ground of hope, and every other means of relief, he fixes his eye upon the cross, exclaiming

> "Should worlds conspire to drive me thence,
> Moveless and firm this heart should lie;
> Resolv'd, for that's my last defence,
> If I must perish, there to die."

It is by faith, as an operative principle of universal obedience to the gospel of Christ, that the believer "purifies his heart" and adorns his character with "the beauties of holiness," through the power of the Divine Spirit. It is by faith he "overcomes the world;" the dread of its frown, the desire of its smile, its evil maxims, and its corrupt principles. It is by faith he quenches "the fiery darts of the wicked one," is delivered from the wiles of the devil, and bruises the serpent's head. It is by faith, as a pilgrim and stranger upon earth, he cherishes the desire and indulges the expectation of that country which God hath promised to them that love him. It is by faith that he rises superior to the love of life, vanquishes the fear of death, and while the monster

> "Puts his most horrid form of mischief on,"

smiles at his terrors, and, swelling into rapture, exclaims, "O death, where is thy sting!" Read the descriptions of faith in God's Word, and you will be ready to say, "It is all but omnipotent." Peruse the eleventh chapter of the epistle to the Hebrews; and thus enter into the temple, where God has recorded the victories, treasured up the spoils, and canonised the heroes of faith. Read the pages of ecclesiastical his-

tory, and in "the noble army of martyrs" behold the power of faith. Ascend up into the celestial world, and in the "multitude which no man can number," redeemed out of every kindred, and tribe, and people upon earth, see the power of faith. For though it is there changed into vision, and hope, its companion, into fruition, it was faith that raised to their seats of glory every one of those beatified inhabitants.

But faith stands not alone upon earth; it gives rise to patience. This follows of course. Patience is the rich ripe fruit of faith. It is faith in an unseen world that makes patience both necessary and possible: necessary, because that world is so glorious; possible, because it is so sure. On account of its glory, without patience the delay could not be endured; on account of its certainty, delay can be made tolerable. By patience, then, we mean a quiet waiting, amidst sufferings and sorrows, for the heavenly kingdom; an uncomplaining willingness to remain any length of time, and amidst any tribulation, for the glory to be revealed. It is through patience, therefore, that the saints "inherit the promises," as well as through faith. By it they hold fast the hope of everlasting life, when everything seems calculated to loosen their grasp, and to induce them to abandon their cherished expectation. "Ye have need of patience," said the apostle, when alluding to the bitter persecutions of those to whom he wrote, "that after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise." It is true, this applied to their circumstances with a force which does not appertain to ours; they had earth embittered to them by every kind of painful affliction; they "endured a great fight of affliction," were "made gazing-stocks to others," were treated "as the

filth and offscouring of all things," were tortured, afflicted, tormented. Had they not "need of patience," then, to wait for a heaven which was drawing them, with its irresistible attractions, at the time when earth was converted into a minor hell? Had they not "need of patience," to endure the mockings of men, when there awaited them the congratulations of angels; the gloom of a dungeon, when there were prepared for them the felicities of paradise; the fetters of a prison-house, when, by dying, they could put on the robes of light; the terrors of protracted martyrdom, when one mortal struggle would elevate them to a crown of life? This was endured. Behold the patience of the saints.

But is this sacred virtue confined to times of persecution, and exhibited only by martyrs and confessors? Must the storms of bygone days rise and burst again upon the church, to give us the exhibition of the grace of patience? Oh, no! How bright a manifestation of patience has given rise to this discourse! Think of that dear saint whose loss we all this day so deeply mourn. Arrested by disease in the midst of as much connubial delight and domestic happiness as fall to the lot of the most favoured of mortals; with so many and such endeared objects to detain her heart upon earth; alternating for months, and even years, between the flattering illusions of hope, and the dark forebodings of apprehension, and witnessing the gradual extinction of the one amidst the deepening hue of the other; enduring the languors of disease through the "wearisome nights and months of vanity" which were appointed to her; and when the dread certainty was realised that the hour of separation was come, and when the earnest of heavenly bliss was in the soul, and the vast posses-

sion itself in all its glory and attraction stood present to the eye of faith, and when the heaven-drawn, heaven-bound soul, had herself untied "the cords of love, and the bands of a man," and had yielded herself up to a divine and heavenly love, and felt herself no more belonging to earth but to heaven; was not here something of a martyr's patience, to endure the sufferings of a poor, frail, wasting body, through lingering months of disease, without a murmur, and to wait thus long without one fretful wish for the moment of dismissal? "Here also is the patience of the saints."

What must be the influence of such a state of mind, in meetening the possessor to be "a partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light!" No circumstances of life, (and let the sufferer hear and drink in the soul-comforting thought,) no circumstances of life seem to ripen the Christian so fast or so perfectly for heaven, as the scenes of sorrow and affliction. Oh! then let our comforts go, then let our eyes weep, then let our hearts bleed, if our Father is thus ripening us for everlasting fruition and inconceivable bliss. It is on this account the apostle says, "Let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing;" as if he intended to intimate, that when we are enabled to exercise the grace of patience, we have reached the highest form in the school of Christ, have nothing more to learn upon earth, and are ready and meet to depart, and to be with Jesus; and have then obtained as much grace as can be possessed, short of glory itself. Hence the apostle's wonderful prayer for the Colossians "that they might be strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness." Patience is the Christian's

suffering power, his passive fortitude, in which the apostle prays they might be "strengthened with all might;" that there might be a kind of almightiness in them; that they might exhibit a capacity for endurance which should look like the impress of God's own long-suffering, and of which the Divine power should be the principle and the pattern. Of such a patience, who can measure the result? What mind is vast enough, what heart is big enough, to comprehend the full sense of those words, "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory?" How might I dwell upon every syllable, and every point of contrast! "Affliction" and "glory;" "light affliction," and "far more exceeding weight of glory;" "momentary affliction," and "eternal glory." Well might the apostle say, "I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." Heaven were a poor heaven, if it did not make us gainers, whatever we lose or suffer upon earth. It were high time, brethren, for us to give over the Christian profession, if we do not credit the account that its rewards and honours will surmount the reproach and trouble, or if we think its cross more weighty than its crown. Are the price and worth of eternal glory fallen? It has been counted worth living for, worth suffering for, worth dying for, worth waiting for; and shall it not be so accounted by us?

Patience, then, sufferer, patience! The first moment, and the first glance of heaven will be an infinite recompense for all you suffer, all you lose on earth. If every step be a step of suffering, then let each be a step of patience. Weep you may; murmur you must not.

Nature may pay the tribute of a groan, but grace must pay it with a smile. The shower of your tears may fall, but in the rays of the Sun of Righteousness must reflect the beauteous rainbow of the promise. It is neither over rocks of stoicism, nor through floods of unrestrained grief, you make your way to glory, Christian; but along the path of resignation, which, if it be like the valley of Baca, and have its briars and its thorns, has its refreshing rain-pools of heavenly consolation.

III. Let us now consider and enforce the apostle's exhortation to surviving Christians, to imitate the example of those who "through faith and patience inherit the promises."

"That ye be not slothful." Slothfulness, in every aspect in which it can be viewed, and in every relation to human affairs, is a censurable, disgraceful, and destructive habit. With that incalculable source of energy which every rational and healthy mind carries about within itself, and with the many occasions and demands for its exercise, which in this busy world surround us, it is a sin and a shame for any man to "stand idle all the day long." Indolence, in reference to the concerns of this world, is bad enough. But where shall we find language sufficiently strong to describe the present guilt and future misery of indolence and sloth in reference to the soul and the soul's concerns? Of all the instances of folly, sin, and misery, which the inhabitants of earth present, either to the angels in heaven, or to the fallen spirits in the bottomless pit, the most astounding must be the sight of an impenitent sinner, slumbering in careless security over the salvation of his immortal soul. One should be led to imagine, did not experience testify to the contrary, that there is enough in that one word

Eternity to rouse all men to the most intense anxiety, and to the most laborious diligence. The import of that solemn word Eternity speaks, without one additional remark, the necessity of being prepared.

But I remember that my business, by appointment, this morning, is not so much with slumbering worldlings as with slothful professors; not so much with those who are sound asleep upon the precipice of destruction, as with those who are slumbering upon the couch of spiritual ease. Ye nominal Christians, ye over whom conscience has sufficient power to prevent you from altogether absenting yourselves from the means of grace and from discontinuing prayer, but whose attendance upon them is cold, profitless, and vain; ye who retain your place in the church of God, but whose heart is going after strangers; ye who have not abandoned your profession by open apostacy, either in the way of heresy, immorality, or miserly covetousness, but who, by a prevailing worldliness, and an ineffectual attempt to reconcile God and Mammon, are lowering the import, sullying the honour, and beclouding the lustre of the Christian name; ye who have lost "your first love," and are now among the heartless, the lukewarm, and the careless, though not among the vicious and profane; ye who take up religion only at random opportunities, and abandon to it such fragments of time as the busy history of a life spent in worldliness can afford, consider, I beseech you, on this solemn morning, the danger and the guilt of such a state of heart and conduct. How perilous to yourselves, how corrupting to others, how discreditable to religion, how displeasing to Christ, is slothfulness in the Christian profession! Do, do, consider the mighty work to be done, and the

"few and evil days" for doing it. The fight of faith is for a crown of glory, and failure is everlasting infamy. The race of Christianity is for life eternal; and it is a race against time, in which there is not one moment to spare from its earnest and toilsome prosecution. Remember, you need not only a title to heaven, but a meetness for it, and that meetness lies in victory over earth, sin, and self. "Yes, the mighty work to be done ere we die, (and we may die any day,) is that we may be translated from the dominion of sin to the kingdom of grace, is the crucifixion of 'the old man,' and the resurrection of the new; is the transmutation of the character of earth which we have at first, into the character of heaven which we must acquire afterwards: else heaven we shall never reach. The distance, great as it is, between the two states, must be traversed on this side of death, or we shall never attain to a state of blessedness on the other side death. It is a far journey, and short is the period that we have for the performance of it. With many of us the day is far spent, and the shades of night are gathering around us." And shall we still linger, loiter, hesitate? Shall we still, with a setting sun, a coming night, trifle and slumber, and content ourselves with a few feeble and ineffectual aspirations after holiness and heaven? Foolish and slumbering virgins, awake, awake! The Bridegroom is coming. I hear the sound of his solemn procession. It is near, even at the door with some of you. Arise, and trim your lamps, and be ready. Oh, the indescribable, the inconceivable misery, to be among the number against whom "the door is shut!" and to be shut out with a lamp of profession in your hand; to go down to the pit with a lamp of profession in your hand; to go

into the deep shades of eternal night with a lamp in your hand, but a lamp without oil, and therefore without one single ray to illumine and enliven the "outer darkness!"

"Be not slothful," but "gird up the loins of your mind." Ever be in that state in which you would be found when the grim messenger shall come to usher you into the presence of the Judge of quick and dead. Could that happy spirit who has lately left our world be permitted to address you from her throne of glory, with what an emphasis would she say, "Beloved friends, with whom on earth I took sweet counsel, and walked to the house of God in company, could you conceive of but a thousandth part of the glory which now surrounds me, you would account that world which so sinfully engrosses your attention scarcely worth a passing glance, a momentary thought. Be not slothful, when heaven or hell hangs upon your life; be not slothful, when eternity is before you; be not slothful, when

> 'Infinite joy, or endless woe,
> Attends on every breath.'

How should your indolence be rectified by the consideration of what is before you! Be not slothful; and if my death should contribute to your increased and full decision, it will add another note to the song of praise, which I have commenced in heaven, and am to prolong through eternity. And, therefore, with all the emphasis derived from the felicities of heaven and the wonders of eternity, I say to you, Be not slothful."

But observe also the other part of the apostolic injunction: "Be followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises." The word trans-

lated followers signifies imitators. If we would follow them to their seats of glory, we must resemble them as they were in their state of grace. Their faith and patience must be copied into our character and conduct. The examples of departed saints, especially of such as were eminent for their piety, must be held sacred by memory. The righteous must be "had in everlasting remembrance." We perpetuate their name upon the sculptured monument, and preserve their bodily resemblance by the painter's art (and blessed be the art which can so perpetuate a mortal form!) we may do so innocently; we may lawfully indulge in all the sober luxury of grief, by going forth to the sepulchre weeping, and by gazing upon the portrait which looks so lovingly upon us, till it seems almost to speak to us, and to hold posthumous intercourse: all this is well, Christian, but it is not enough. Their sanctified character, their once living piety, is their best monument and their most exact image. Affection gazes with fondness upon the one, but religion looks with a kind of holy reverence on the other. It is that eye of penitence, that look of faith, that smile of hope, that air of devotion, that brow of confidence, that posture of humility; in short, that whole moral countenance, so like the Saviour, which ought to be dear to us. How ought it to be cherished in most precious remembrance, and remembered to be imitated! Imitation of their excellences is the highest tribute of respect to the memory of the departed spirit. Biography has peculiar honour, considered as one of the most powerful means for the formation of character; but what books have such power over us as the vividly recollected example of our pious friends? They have all the charm to attract us with which affection invests

them: they are the moral pictures of the departed; they are viewed in that light, which brings out their excellences into prominence, and throws their imperfections into the shade; for who can see the failings of a friend whom death has taken away? They show us what grace can do for us, in what it did for them. And then, the very sorrow with which these patterns of excellence are viewed, does but soften us to receive the impress of their likeness.

Bear in recollection, dear brethren, that it is the living saint rather than the dying one, that is commended to our notice and imitation. It is not the professor uttering his swan-like song on the eve of dissolution, and entering heaven with the note of triumph on his lips; this is beautiful enough, though perhaps in some cases somewhat delusive. I am not insensible to the value of a triumphant passage through the dark domain of the king of terrors; Christianity then appears in power and glory, when it changes the spectral form of death into a welcome visitant, erects its trophies on the tomb, and inspires immortal hopes in dying moments. But to be of value, then, all this must be preceded by a life as holy as the death is happy. Dying ecstacies, as well as mortal agonies, may undoubtedly be attributed in some cases to a fictitious source; to the dreams occasioned by opium, to the illusions of a perturbed imagination, or to that morbid excitement, that preternatural radiance which disease will sometimes impart to the intellect, and which resembles the delirious splendour which it can occasionally enkindle in the eye. But when a triumphant death is the close of an eminently holy and useful life, it is a scene as beautiful in the spiritual world, as is the glorious sunset of a fine

autumnal day in the natural. It is a scene for the imitation of earth, the admiration of heaven, and the instruction of all.

Such a scene has been exhibited to this congregation in the lamented decease of their pastor's beloved, inestimable wife. Next to the pastor himself, speaking generally, the most important and influential member of any church is the woman he has chosen to be his companion in the journey of life. Were I to concede what has been contended for by some, that no more is to be desired or expected from her, as regards the church, than from any other female in the community, (though I am not disposed to concede this,) still it is impossible to forget the influence, for good or for evil, she must necessarily exert over the character and conduct, the usefulness and comfort of her husband; and it does therefore appear to me to be the solemn duty of those who are called to the Christian ministry, to make their selection with a view to their usefulness in their pastoral, as well as their comfort in their domestic, life. The wife of a pastor has an opportunity of doing good allotted to no other female in the whole society. The publicity of her situation gives to her example a power, which, from its being so constantly and thoroughly before the people, no other can possess; while her knowledge of the circumstances of the flock, and the institutions connected with it, present to her an opportunity of filling that wide circle of operations with the gentle and beneficent influence of her prudence, her piety, and her activity, which no other situation can command.

I may, with great propriety, and with equal boldness, make these remarks on the present mournful occasion,

when I am called upon to hold up one of the most beautiful specimens of female excellence, and one of the most perfect examples of a pastor's wife, which it has ever been my lot, or yours, to behold. The account which I shall now read to you speaks, of course, and indeed avows, its authorship; and what other hand could sketch the picture of her, who is so mysteriously taken from us, but his who once possessed the bright original? It may be well conceived with what a mixture of sorrowful, yet admiring affection, he drew each lineament upon his painting, and with what disappointment he looked upon his labours when he had finished it, from a consciousness how far short he had fallen in this attempt to do justice to the excellence which he wished, but vainly attempted to portray.

BRIEF SKETCH OF THE CHARACTER AND LABOURS OF MRS SHERMAN.

The dear departed one was "a saint indeed." Few persons were better fitted to shine in the world than herself. Her beautiful form and lovely countenance, her engaging manners, her facility of expression, her ready wit, her amiable disposition, her musical talent, her buoyant spirits, her deep humility, and her readiness to serve and oblige all, rendered her a most joyous companion, and the favourite of all who had the happiness of her acquaintance. But when all these ornaments of mind and person became sanctified and directed to the highest end for which they can be enjoyed, the service of God and the salvation of souls, she shone with a splendour among the sons and daughters of the Lord God Almighty which few attain.

Blessed with the pious example and instructions of a devoted mother, she very early imbibed a regard for religion and for pious persons, and maintained with great punctuality her set times for reading the Scriptures and prayer. But her devotion wanted that living power which faith in Christ alone imparts. Of this she was sensible, and for this she prayed. God graciously answered her prayer, in a manner she little anticipated.

When about twenty-two years of age, a District Visiting Society was formed at Enfield, for affording temporal relief to the poor. She took a district, in which she found an old woman, ninety years of age, exceedingly ignorant, but very anxious to be taught the way of salvation. Her interesting inquiries drew forth the sympathies of Martha's loving heart to teach her the way of Christ; but now she found her want of the very essentials of a spiritual teacher, she needed to be taught herself the merit and preciousness of the atonement, before she could explain it to another. Sad and prayerful, she oft returned home, determining that she would search the Scriptures, and gain information to convey the truth to her veteran pupil. She did so, but obtained little increase of knowledge, till, after prayer one morning for direction, previous to her visit, she remembered having heard Dr Burder, with great interest, deliver a course of lectures on the Essentials of Religion; and thought she might find something in them that would aid her to impart light to her anxious inquirer She began reading the chapter on the Atonement. Before she finished it a Divine light was shed upon her soul, she saw, as in a sunbeam, the substitution of Christ, and his perfect atonement for sin, laying a safe foundation for her hope. By faith she embraced this gospel remedy, and fell down at the footstool of mercy, to bedew with tears of joy the spot at which she had sought for illumination, with a broken heart.

Now she went to her aged inquirer with new zeal, love, and knowledge. Twice a week, for four years, she continued her visits, pouring the light of Christ's gospel into a mind which had been closed against it by prejudice and ignorance during a long life. Never had she entered a place of worship but to be baptized, married, and churched; yet the gospel from the loving Martha's lips penetrated, enlightened, and saved that soul; and she died at ninety-three, in the full prospect of eternal life, exclaiming to her devoted teacher, "*Then there is hope for me, Miss!*"

Even before her conversion, she was undesignedly useful to convert a soul. A young friend, who became strongly attached to her, observed, while staying at her house, Martha's punctual retirement for prayer and reading; but thought it unnecessary for herself. Martha immediately persuaded her to adopt the practice, and very soon her young friend began to pray in earnest for salvation and found it, while Martha was a stranger to its enjoyment. In her turn, she became an exhorter to Martha, not to be satisfied with mere formal devotion. This young friend died soon after, in the assured possession of a justified state.

Thus two souls, one before, and another immediately after, her conversion to God, were given her as the reward of efforts to do good and serve God. At the time they were great encouragements; and she often referred to them in after life as a stimulus to exertion for so good a Master.

After a year and a half's residence at Reading, which God graciously gave her as a preparation for a larger sphere, she came with her husband to this church and congregation, with a deep sense of her responsibility and the importance of using her talents for Christ, her gracious Lord. How effectively she employed them, this assembly can bear cheerful witness. Soon after she arrived, she formed, one after the other, four classes, which she superintended with great affection and zeal. One for poor mothers, which met once a fortnight; and the other for mothers occupying superior stations in life, which assembled at her house once a month. It is better felt than described, how kind and loving she was to both poor and rich; how willing to take the lowest place, so that any one might be benefited; how she laboured and studied to find suitable reading for the classes, and how earnestly she sought the salvation of all the children of the mothers. Oh, how pleasantly has her face shone with delight as she greeted her husband, on her return from those meetings, while she told the tales of improvement in domestic life, and the hopes of mothers in the conversion of their children! Ah! none will feel her loss more severely than her maternal societies.

Two other classes she formed for the young; one for the young ladies of the congregation, which she met once a month, and the other for servants and young persons who had left the Sunday school, which she taught every sabbath afternoon. The young people who had the privilege of her instructions, will not, cannot, forget her prayers, her lovely demeanour, her useful advice, her ardent endeavours after their conversion. But they do not know the labour it cost her to prepare to meet them. All her notes are preserved; every one she wrote twice over; first in rough, and then more maturely. Yet they are but notes, allowing herself the utterance of a full heart, which her felicity of expression enabled her to pour forth in melting tones of tenderness and love. Her correspondence with her classes was continued amidst the demands of correspondence with a large circle of friends. Most of the members have some written memorial of her fidelity and affection.

As may be expected, many were converted. Some of the most unlikely among the poor mothers became members of the church, and

blessed the day they ever heard her voice, for the domestic comfort it had brought to their humble dwellings. And several among the young attested that her instructions became the means of leading them to Christ and to join his people.

In all the societies connected with this church, specially those conducted by ladies, the Clothed Female school, the Missionary, the Dorcas and the Clothing societies, her regularity, punctuality, and efforts to gain subscribers made her influence very precious, while every society or individual that sought her aid generally found a laborious helper.

To her husband she was a help-meet, indeed! What can he say about his loss? "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight." Her patience, forbearance, affection, labour, devoted zeal for Christ, attention to the interests of children and servants, and too ardent love for him, placed her as near perfection as he can well conceive a saint to be. Oh, how swiftly have the thirteen years of blissful union passed away! But her works follow her.

Two years and a half ago, disease took fast hold on her frame. It was thought that change of air and scene, and the use of medicine, might remove its incipient threatenings. They were all tried, but in vain. The physicians who were consulted stated, that by care life might be prolonged; but unless something extraordinary and unexpected occurred she could not long survive. But during that affliction grace ripened, her love to Christ and souls increased; and her labours were not lessened, only exchanged. She thought she could do good by her pen, and corresponded more freely with her friends and her classes: when her strength failed, she tried other means to exalt Christ. At Ventnor, she liquidated, by application to friends, a small debt on the chapel; and by her patient, persevering instructions, a young widow, who had recently lost her husband, was led to see that her Maker was her husband, and has recently joined the Independent church in that place, praising God for the sickness that brought her unknown friend to Ventnor. She formed a Maternal Society there, which is still flourishing, and the cause of spiritual comfort to many. At Hastings, she induced the excellent clergyman to form a Bible class for young men, which is still in existence, and gives joy to his heart. When on the Continent, whether visiting among nobility or the poor, a word for Christ was sure to be introduced; and her character and conduct have left a savour in Silesia, in Hamburg, and Berlin, which distance and time have not diminished.

After an interview with Dr. Moore, at Hastings, on the 10th of

February, her husband had the affecting duty to announce to her that the sickness was unto death, and that the physician thought the sooner she was at home the better. With many struggles between affection and fidelity, he accomplished his painful task. But to his astonishment, she received the news as a relief to her spirit; and, after a few yearnings over her husband and children, wept tears of joy that her pilgrimage was about to close. "How soon does he expect me to leave you?" was her calm inquiry. "It is quite uncertain; but you may linger till April or May," was the reply. "I thank God!" she exclaimed; "heaven is nearer than I expected."

On February 12th, she returned home, and, amid many alternations, continued to cheer all around her by her piety, patience, and cheerfulness. At her request, her friends and classes came to see her in groups; all who were present on those occasions, will remember her smile and her few words of love to each, as she shook them by the hand. Oh, it was a delightful sight, while all around were deeply affected at their anticipated loss, to behold her calm spirit bidding them farewell, as if she were about to start for a short journey and soon to return!

She was favoured with many visits from the elders and from ministers, and especially from her kind friend, the Rev. George Clayton, who, at her request, continued them till she needed them no more.

On the 17th of May, it was evident that death was approaching; but, to the surprise of all, she rallied again, and slept tolerably well during the night. About twelve o'clock on the 18th, no doubt could remain what the result must soon be. The struggle for breath, the excessive pain in the side, and the convulsive agony of the whole frame, were fearful; but the celestial joy within surpassed the expectations of all. To the last, her intellect was unimpaired, and her speech sufficiently loud to be heard. "The long looked-for hour is come, my dear," said her husband. "It is," she replied, "blessed be my Saviour!" "You have long professed that Christ was precious, is he precious to you now?" Lifting up her almost fleshless arms and hands, like the wings of a bird ready to fly, she let them fall on the bed, and exclaimed, "Infinitely! infinitely!" "Have you, my precious one, any consciousness of the immediate presence of Jesus Christ?" Pausing a moment, she replied, "No; I do not know what that is, my consciousness is the consciousness of faith. I know that he is with me by the support and ineffable consolations he pours into my soul; but I shall soon know what it is, for I shall be with him,

and be like him." "Then, like David, you can say, you fear no evil in the dark valley?" She replied, "The valley is very long, but not dark, for he is with me in it, 'his rod and staff comfort me.'" "Then you can bear testimony to your children, that a life spent in the service of God is a most pleasant and profitable life?" As if making an effort beyond her strength, to say something which her heart dictated, but finding it impossible, she replied with all energy, "I can! I can!" "What now, when earth is vanishing, is your sole dependence for acceptance with God at the great day?" "Only the perfect and finished righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ.

'Nothing in my hand I bring:
Simply to the cross I cling.'"

Many other precious sentences and words fell from her lips; but these will suffice to show the fulness of her joy, and what an abundant entrance was given her into the kingdom of her God and Saviour. At twenty minutes to four o'clock on Thursday afternoon, May 18th, she fell asleep in Jesus.

One day her husband asked her what message he should carry from her to the people when she was taken from them; her brief answer was, "Tell them to love Christ and one another, to labour for souls, and exhibit holiness, then they must be happy."

To all the dear friends, whose attentions have been so unremitting to soothe her passage to the tomb, her husband can only offer his grateful acknowledgments. May he who rewards a cup of cold water given to a disciple, in the name of a disciple, return into their bosoms their kindness a thousand-fold! For himself, he asks as the greatest favour, "Dear friends, pray that the grace of Christ may descend on him, and on his now motherless children."

If anything need or can be added to this heart-affecting narrative, I would mention the interview which I was privileged myself to hold with Mrs. Sherman, about a week before her dismissal. It was a scene to which I recollect no parallel, and which it is quite impossible for me either to forget or to describe. Her countenance, beautiful even in death, was lighted up with a smile, that looked rather like the joy which we can conceive illuminates the soul emerging from the

cold stream of death, and taking her first step into paradise, than the peace of one who was about to step into that stream; in other words, the smile of one who was looking back upon death as a dreaded event that was over, than of one who was looking forward to it as just at hand. It was not only a smile in death, but it was a smile at death. It was the morning of the missionary sermon in this place; when she could catch the sound of the organ, and the chorus of praise rising from the congregated host, which in bygone times she had helped to swell; she could hear the hum of voices, and the sounds of recognition and gratulation beneath her window, of the tribes that had come up to Zion, and there was she, in the chamber of sickness, on the bed of death, contrasting her situation with the gladsome circumstances of multitudes in all the vigour of life and the joyousness of health. If a momentary cloud, a passing gloom, had come over the spirit from such a contrast, who could have wondered? Yea, who does not wonder that it did not? But it did not. The Sun of Righteousness in cloudless splendour shone upon her soul, which reflected his beams in that most heavenly smile that I ever saw upon the countenance of any human being in life or death. She seemed standing within the precincts of glory; and the only thing that reminded me of mortality, was the wasted form and the natural tear she dropped, (but wiped it soon,) which, though it glistened in her eye still sparkling, did not for a moment interrupt the ineffable joy. I felt, and said to her, "If this be dying, who could not lie down and die with you, if they could die like you?" She would have talked if the strength of her body had been equal to the vigour of her soul; but every syllable she uttered was descrip-

tive of a "peace that passeth understanding," a "joy unspeakable and full of glory." Could such a scene as that be witnessed in public, as, to be known, it must be witnessed, for no words can describe it, Christianity would, one should suppose, appear to all men a Divine reality, a heavenly plant, an eternal subsistence; and no man would have power or heart, except he were a demon, to say aught against it. Before that scene the loftiest philosopher must be humbled, infidelity turn pale and silent, and folly and vice, for a brief season, become serious, and disposed to say, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like hers."

It will probably be expected by some, that, in conclusion I should attempt a formal delineation of her character; but I confess myself unequal to the duty. She, who, whether viewed as a daughter, a wife, or a mother; whether as a Christian professor or the wife of a Christian pastor; whether shedding her benign and gentle influence upon the domestic circle which she adorned and cheered, or in a more public sphere combining and directing the energies of her own sex by the light of her wisdom and the warmth of her zeal, was equally excellent in all; she, in whom the active and the passive virtues were so nicely balanced, in whom all the sweetness of the private character was so well blended with the prudence of the public one, in whom the power of grace elevated and sanctified the loveliest endowments of nature, and whose beautiful and symmetrical character was so well known and so much admired, needs no eulogy from me. Through faith and patience she now inherits the promises. "I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead

which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them."

To you, my beloved brother, my bereaved friend, "my companion in tribulation," what shall I say? To affirm that I sympathise with you, truly and tenderly sympathise, is an expression too cold and too feeble to utter the emotions of my heart. And yet what more can I say? I can imagine, we all can, what you have lost; but you only can fully know it. Once before now, in similar circumstances, you have "glorified God in the fires;" may it be granted to you, in this second trial of your faith and patience, to repeat the lesson you have already given by your example to the flock, of your submission to the will of God! Honoured, my brother, above most of your brethren of the ministry, it may seem necessary in the view of Infinite Wisdom, which better knows us than we know ourselves, that you should be tried more than others; the Saviour, your Master, who has redeemed the church, was the deepest sufferer that ever trod our vale of tears, and through suffering was made perfect; and they who come nearest to him and most resemble him in usefulness, must be most like him in suffering. You are the centre of universal sympathy. You have no need to say, "Pity me, pity me, O my friends, for the hand of God hath touched me;" myriads pour forth the tide of their sympathy into your heart, which may God open to receive it! May it be granted to you, to say with something of the same feeling as the language was originally uttered by its inspired author, "Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort; who comforteth us in

all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God. For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ. And whether we be afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation, which is effectual in the enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer: or whether we be comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation."

Ye lovely, and now motherless children! all our hearts feel for you. But God, my lambs, will take care of you. With such a father still left to you, incalculable and irreparable as is your loss, you are not orphans. Much is lost; but much is left. We will invoke for you the omnipotent care, the infallible guidance, and the beneficent smile of your mother's God, and your living father's God; and entreat that, although now denied the privilege of her society and her maternal care on earth, you may dwell with her in heaven, and reap in that blessed world the fruit of those prayers which she presented for you before she ascended to glory.

And you, the venerable surviving parent, accept my tenderest condolence on the loss of such a child. She was the evening star of your life, when almost every other had set ere your own sun went down. But though that star has set on the hemisphere of grace, it has risen and become a morning star on the firmament of glory. Be thankful that you had such a daughter; be thankful that she was so trained for her situation in the church of God. And anticipate, as you well may, at no distant day, the moment of re-union in that world where there shall be no more death.

Members of this Christian church, I do not ask you

to sympathise with, and pray for, your bereaved pastor; it is unnecessary for me to do this; for there is not a heart in this whole church that does not bleed for him. Much and justly as you have loved him, you never have loved him as you now do, when you see him lifting up his head, a widower among you. He has been endeared to you by his character, and his labours, and his usefulness; and that endearment is now increased by his heavy loss. But I would tell you, in few sentences, how you can most effectually bind up the wound of his lacerated heart, and how you can even yet sweeten his now bitter cup. Let this bereavement be sanctified for the spiritual benefit of his church. I do not wrong his conjugal love, and do only justice to his pastoral fidelity, when I say, that if his loss shall promote your good; if you shall be made more earnest in prayer, more spiritual, more consistent; if there should be a revival of genuine religion in this congregation, then heavy as has been his loss, yet standing at the grave of her that was dearest to him on earth, he will unmurmuringly say, "It is well;" nor querulously ask, why some sacrifice less costly to him might not have sufficed to accomplish the end. And could a messenger be sent after his departed wife to that world of glory on which she has entered, to bring from thence some counsel and admonition bearing the weight and emphasis of a message sent from heaven and eternity, I cannot imagine she would alter one syllable of the solemn words she sent to you from her death-bed. Imagine at this moment you see heaven opened, and her spirit now beaming upon you with the affection which found its habitual dwelling in her heart, and its constant manifestation on her most lovely coun-

tenance. Behold, there she is! She is about to speak; her lips move; hearken to her words! "Love Christ and one another; labour for souls; exhibit holiness; and then you must be happy." Oh! let those words from this hour sink deeply into every heart. Let her have a monument in every heart; and be this the inscription.

Consider what an example has been set before you, and has now been withdrawn. It was, indeed, a privilege, to have such a pattern; but what a responsibility rests upon you! You have had in her a real, though not official, minister; the ministry of a holy and useful life. To the glowing eloquence of her husband's pulpit, she has added the mute, but powerful eloquence of her own personal and domestic life. You have lost her example, her activity, and her prayers; and, as a church, you are in spiritual excellence much poorer for the loss; but still you can, by memory, perpetuate the recollection of all she was. I solemnly, I earnestly, entreat you, to be imitators of her faith and patience. I am tremblingly anxious that the influence of such a life and such a death should not be lost upon you. Such a state of things would be a dark sign indeed. If there be in this church a single soul in a state of backsliding, may her death restore that soul! If there be any one sinking into a state of sloth and worldliness, may that soul, by her death, be aroused! If there be any cooling, or cooled down, from the ardour of first love, into a Laodicean lukewarmness, may they, by her death, have the flame of devotion rekindled! If there be signs of declining religion in the church at large, may her death be the blessed means of revival! If the melting voice of ministerial solicitude, habitually heard from this

pulpit, has, through the hardness of your hearts, lost any of its power, may her death give it its wonted pungency! Over her grave may the fertilising drops of a celestial shower be seen descending in answer to a renewed spirit of wrestling and persevering prayer!

Except in one solitary, and to me mournful instance, I never have been so solicitous as I am at this moment, that the death of an unofficial member of the church might be blessed to survivors. The one exception, to which I now refer, had much in it that resembled the case before us. It was that of another minister's wife, not unknown to this congregation, but how much better known to him who now addresses you! She also prayed that her decease might prove to be a dispensation of love to the church of which she was a member, in the way of increasing their spiritual attainments. From her death-bed, she also sent the following message, "Give my love to the church, that church which I so much love, and tell them to be a pattern of holiness to all the churches around." Oh that living professors would think as much of holiness, and long for it as much, as dying ones do! This was the wish of your departed friend. The wishes of dying friends are sacred; let hers be sacred with you. Fulfil her dying request, and be a holy church. You have lost her life; lose not her death. She will never again speak to you with her living voice; listen to her admonition from the tomb, and receive the voice which says, "Be ye also ready, for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh."

May the female members of the church cherish this bright example of piety in one of their own sex.

Mothers! I especially beseech you to recollect, not only her maternal excellence, but her assiduity to promote yours. You have lost her, and will not fail to miss her from the meetings of her Maternal Societies. Her judicious and well-balanced mind will shed its light no more upon yours; and her sweet persuasive voice will no more soften the cares, relieve the anxieties, and guide the efforts of a mother's heart, yearning for the welfare of her children. But remember what she has done. Follow out her counsels; act out her plans; and teach your children to repeat and bless her name and her memory next to your own. When they shall throw their arms about your neck, and weep the thanks they cannot speak, for your wisdom, fidelity, and affection, in guiding their youth and forming their character, then whisper in their ears the name of this dear saint, and tell them it was Mrs. Sherman who inspired you with a resolution, and taught you how to fulfil it, to bring them up in the fear of the Lord.

And now, redeemed, beloved, lamented, and glorified immortal, farewell! till we meet in glory everlasting, where there shall be no more death, and where the sigh and the tear of separation will be exchanged for the smile and the song of mutual recognition and eternal re-union. Thou art gone to that heaven which is attracting to itself all that is holy upon earth. We could part with thee for no other place or society, than thou hast found there. The voice of Him who hath washed thee in his blood, clothed thee in his righteousness, and "put his comeliness upon thee," and who hath therefore a deeper interest and a nearer right in thee than we have, hath called thee to himself. To him we resign thee;

and instead of fretfully, selfishly, fruitlessly wishing that thou wert again with us, we will, from this hour, make it our urgent solicitude, our practical endeavour, and our most earnest prayer, to be thy followers and thine imitators in that faith and patience, by which thou dost now "inherit the promises."

A TRIBUTE OF AFFECTIONATE RESPECT

TO THE MEMORY OF THE FATHERS AND FOUNDERS
OF THE LONDON MISSIONARY SOCIETY.

A SERMON,

DELIVERED IN SURREY CHAPEL,

WEDNESDAY MORNING, MAY 9, 1849.

BEING PART OF THE SERVICES ON OCCASION OF THE
SOCIETY'S JUBILEE.

Thirty years ago I was honoured to lift up my voice in this pulpit, to advocate, on a similar occasion to the present, the cause for the furtherance of which we are now assembled. Since that day what changes have come over both the preacher and his audience, over the church and the world, over the Missionary Society and its supporters! A whole generation of the human race, numbering eight hundred millions of immortal beings, in one ceaseless stream, has been flowing into eternity; and of all that vast multitude, how few were prepared for the awful transition!

In looking round upon those galleries, where, on that former occasion to which I have alluded, sat in dignity and honour the fathers and founders of the Missionary Society, surrounded by their junior brethren, looking up to them with veneration and esteem, I search in vain for a solitary representative of that illustrious band. The grave which swallows up all that is mortal, and heaven which attracts to itself all that is holy upon earth, have received them out of our sight, leaving us to echo the appeal of the Jewish seer: "Your fathers, where are they? and the prophets, do they live for ever?" This question shall be the subject of our morning's meditation.

Zechariah i, 5.

Your fathers, where are they? and the prophets, do they live for ever?

It would be both ungrateful and unjust, if we, who are now blessed to carry on the operations of this institution, did not occasionally visit the tombs and do honour to the memory of the men by whom it was founded. Their epitaphs are sermons; by which "they, being dead, yet speak to us." I owe them much, and seize this as a befitting opportunity to acknowledge my obligations, and the subject which I have selected for this occasion is appropriate on another ground. The ravages of death among our ministers have been, of late, unusually frequent. Great and precious names have been expunged from the muster-roll of the living, to be registered among the congregation of the dead. Since the last anniversary, Hamilton, and Payne, and Russell, men who were dear to us all, and especially to those who hold by the theology of the olden time, have fallen in the high places of the field, and lie among the slain. Let it not be imagined that the theme I have chosen is too gloomy for such an occasion as the present. I do but harangue the troops over the bodies of the slain; and snatching the colours from the hands of fallen standard-bearers, who had grasped them in death, I deliver them to their successors, with the charge, "Onwards to battle, and to victory!"

I. I shall consider the mortality of the instruments which God employs for carrying on his cause in the world, not excepting the most valuable and important of them. "Your fathers, where are they? and the prophets, do they live for ever?"

At the time this was spoken, not only had the patriarchs of antiquity, but the seers of after times, the evangelical Isaiah, the plaintive Jeremiah, the vehement Ezekiel, all been gathered to the tomb. As it was then, so has it been in every age since; and so is it now. There is no exemption from the stroke of mortality for the most valuable instruments of God's service. No official dignity, no eminent talents, no distinguished success, exempt their possessor from the lot of humanity. In common with all others, they have passed by sin under the law of death; and their death subserves the Divine purposes, and the interests of men, as well as their lives. In consequence of the publicity of their character, their decease is a still more impressive comment upon the evil nature of sin. Their knell tolls out a more solemn warning than that of private individuals; while their vacant pulpits, hung with sable by their mourning churches have, in the silence of death, a power of impression which their loftiest eloquence never reached. From their death-bed a testimony is borne to the truths of the Gospel and the excellence of religion, more emphatic and commanding than the most argumentative or the most impassioned of their sermons. They finish their ministry, not only at the grave's mouth, where they set the seal of death upon their message, but within the very precincts of the heavenly glory, some rays of which illuminate their wasted form, and help them to exhibit the reality of that sublime and beautiful couplet,

> "A mortal paleness on my cheek,
> But glory in my soul."

The certainty of their death, together with the uncertainty of the time of its approach, supply them with an

incentive to increased and an ever-increasing diligence in the work of their ministry. Their tomb, in their imagination, confronts their pulpit, the very clock which ever looks them in the face reminds them, not only of the measure of their sermon, but of their ever-shortening life; while the Bible out of which they address the people speaks to them each Sabbath morning as they take their place in the sanctuary, and says with sepulchral tones, "Time is short. Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor wisdom, nor knowledge in the grave, whither thou goest." While to the hearer also comes the monition, that the preacher to whom he is listening with rapture, or with listlessness, is a doomed man, and is uttering the words of life from lips which must soon be closed in the silence of the tomb, and speaks a dying man to dying men.

The removal of ministers makes way for a greater variety of gifts and graces to be exercised in the ministry itself; and thus that irrepressible love of novelty which seems to be one of the instincts of our nature is provided for. If death takes from us the useful, so it does the useless; and who amongst us, whatever be his gifts, could hope to extend his power to interest and please much beyond the term of half a century? The withdrawment of men of matured age, rich experience, and ripe wisdom must of course be considered, whenever it occurs, an occasion of sorrow and lamentation. But some compensation for their loss is made by the bringing forward of younger men, with all the ardour of juvenile years, and all the energy of more sanguine temperaments; and the wisdom, power, and goodness of God are conspicuously manifested in continually re-

pairing the losses which his cause sustains by the death of eminent men. Still it is becoming in our younger brethren to unite diffidence with courage, and to pass respectfully over the graves of veterans, who, whatever may have been their faults, were wanting neither in zeal nor in valour, and who, when at last they sunk, fell not without scars nor altogether without laurels. Let those who come forward to be baptised for the dead upon the tombs of the elders approach the font with as much humility as eagerness; and let it be their prayer that a double portion of the spirit of their ascended predecessors may rest upon them, and not their boast that it will. If the fathers had not the wisdom of Solomon, let the sons guard against the rashness, the follies, and the mischiefs of Rehoboam.

But there are reflections connected with the mortality of ministers still more instructive and encouraging than these. How glorious does our Lord Jesus Christ appear in carrying on his cause, not only in spite of, but in the very midst of, and even by, the ravages of death! It is a bright manifestation of his power, to work by such feeble, fallible, mortal creatures as we are: it is a still brighter display of his wisdom and power to make even their death subserve his cause. What consternation is felt in an army, and the fear reaches even the general's heart, when officer after officer falls in battle! A panic has sometimes, from this cause, spread through the host, which the commander could not stop, and the battle has been lost. And even in our own case, the death of eminent missionaries, eloquent preachers, wise pastors, and gifted authors is deeply felt, especially if it be somewhat sudden and unexpected, to be a severe shock, which shoots through every part of the body to which he

belongs, like a momentary pang of personal anguish, surprise, and terror. We are bereft, and are ready for a moment to feel as if the sun had set, and not merely a star; and even the very throne of the great Governor of the universe is hidden for a season behind the tomb of one of his own servants, or else the tear that stands in the eye of faith is so large a drop as to dim our spiritual vision and prevent us from seeing it. But we are soon roused from our distrustful sorrows by the voice which spoke to John in Patmos: "Behold I am he that liveth, and was dead; and I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of death and of Hades." This, in the history of our Society, we have often found to be not only our best, but our only consolation. When the taunting foe exclaimed, "Vanderkemp is dead, Morrison is gone, Williams is slain!" recovering from the stupor, and wiping away our tears, we exclaimed, "Yes; but Jesus lives!" In that one consideration are contained all the resources, hopes, and triumphs of our cause. Many have fallen, many are falling, all will fall; but Jesus lives. Could we call from the invisible world, and assemble in this place this morning, all the fathers and founders of our Society, all the directors, all the ministers, and all the missionaries who have died since the commencement of our enterprise, could we see at one view what we have lost, and all we have lost, how we should be appalled at the number and extent of our sacrifices, and be ready to exclaim, "Oh, what could we not do, if we had all these with us again!" My brethren, add to these the fathers and the prophets of the elder economy; let these be reinforced by the glorious company of the apostles, and the mighty host be swollen by the noble army of martyrs, this, even all

this, would be a feebler ground of confidence, or of hope, than that single voice which now bursts over this assembly from the throne of Jehovah Jesus: "I am alive for evermore; and all power is given unto me in heaven and earth." Christians, be this the watch-word and the war-cry with which, amidst the weakness of the living and the ravages of death, you go forward in this great conflict, "Jesus lives!"

There is much in this view of our subject at once to encourage the timid and to repress the vain. We do not deny that some measure of importance attaches to every individual member of the church of Christ. Every one can do something for God, and is bound to do what he can. God has made no ciphers; though men, by a false humility or indolence, make ciphers of themselves. They do nothing, because they attempt nothing; and they attempt nothing, because they think they are nothing: and this self-despising is likely, except we take care, to be fostered in an age of great societies like ours. Individual power, individual opportunity, individual obligation, are likely to be lost sight of in that which is social. It is the duty of every one to study these three things, his capacities, his opportunities, and his responsibility. And were the whole church of God to enter deeply, conscientiously, and practically into this investigation, and each individual member were to carry in sincerity to God that prayer of the apostle, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" and wait for an answer to this prayer, the sun of the millennial day would soon rise upon our dark world.

The subject which we are now considering is, on the other hand, as humbling to the vain as it is encouraging to the timid. Christ can do much by the weakest

instrument; and he can do altogether without the strongest. "It is a piece of divine royalty and magnificence," said John Howe, "that when he hath prepared and polished a mighty instrument, so as to be capable of some great service, he can lay it aside without loss, and do as well without it." He that could do without apostles and prophets, after he had removed them by death, can dispense with us. We are none of us the axles of his chariot-wheels. This should check the inflation of some men's minds, and repress that overweening conceit by which they destroy in part their own usefulness. It would surprise and mortify many, could they come out of their graves ten years after they had entered them, and still retained the ideas they once entertained of their own importance, to see how well the world goes on without them. If the death of ordinary individuals be but as the casting of a pebble from the seashore into the ocean, which is neither missed from the one nor sensibly gained by the other, the death of the more extraordinary ones is but as the foundering of a piece of rock into the abyss beneath: it makes at the time a rumbling noise and a great splash; but the wave which it raises soon subsides into a ripple, the ripple itself as soon sinks to a placid level, the tide flows, ships pass, commerce goes on, and shore and ocean appear just as they did before the disruption. Ah! my brethren, let us seek to have our record in heaven, where it will be engraven in characters which will stand for ever on the Rock of Ages; for it will soon be effaced here, where it is only as a footprint upon the sand, which the next wave will speedily and entirely obliterate for ever.

II. We now turn to another and a far more delightful

view of the subject. We leave the tombs of the prophets, and quit the scenes of desolation which their death has occasioned, to consider what there is, and how much, which, when these instruments are removed, survives the wreck of mortality, and perpetuates itself through the time to come.

It was the proud boast of Horace, "I shall not all die, much of me will escape death;" and it has proved true. Of all his country's poets, he is the one most delighted in by the English scholar, whether on an upper form at school, or in the evening of a busy life. He is still without an equal either as the lyrist of gentlemanly life, or as the moralist man of the world. But under how much higher and holier an inspiration might the immortal Carey, after he had thrown off from his burning soul that noble scintillation of his zeal, "Expect great things, attempt great things;" or Bogue, after he had written his appeal which founded the Missionary Society, have laid down his pen, and in the spirit of prophecy echoed the words of the poet, Non omnis moriar! Let us then consider what remains of these men.

1. Not only their graves, but their own immortal selves, their deathless spirits. We profess no such unscriptural, unphilosophical tenet; no such gloomy and cheerless dogma that the soul lies entombed with the body amid corruption, earth, and worms. We believe, with the apostle, that to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord; and that we are already come to the spirits of just men made perfect. It is then the language neither of mournful ignorance nor faltering scepticism which asks the question, "Where are they?" With that volume in our hand which lights

us through the dark passage of the tomb with the lamp of inspiration, and exhibits to us the splendours of immortality blazing at the farther end, we are at no loss about their present state.

My brethren, you have perhaps visited that venerable pile which contains the ashes of the mighty dead of England, and as you have paced the aisles of Westminster Abbey, have been filled with pensive awe as English history has stood out before you in those marbles of such exquisite and varied forms which crowd upon your view in that trophy-house of death. "Here," you have said to yourself, "are the memorials of monarchs who swayed the sceptre and ruled the destinies of this great empire, of statesmen who guided its affairs, of orators whose eloquence moved and influenced its parliaments, of patriots who achieved its liberties, of heroes who fought its battles, and of historians who have worthily commemorated its glories. Here are the monuments of poets who fascinated by the creations of their genius and the melody of their numbers, of philosophers who advanced our science, of scholars who enriched our literature, of mechanicians who by their inventions multiplied our comforts and increased our wealth; and of the sculptors who have placed these all but living forms of beauty and majesty before us. Here are their names and their deeds spread out before us in this palace of death and renown in all the glory which could be conferred by the carver's chisel or the scholar's praise." But what world do their spirits now inhabit? Where are they? Where, oh! where? What holy and sensitive imagination does not seem to hear bursting from many a statue of inexpressible beauty the sad lament of Wolsey on his downfall: "Oh that

I had served my God as I have served my king!" What have these mighty men done for God and his cause? How many of their hearts beat loyally and truly with love to Christ? How few of them ever dreamt of entwining the wreath of their fame round his cross! Where are they? How befitting to many of them, so far as regards their eternal state, would be the plain and simple slab in the cloisters of Worcester Cathedral which covers the ashes of some unnamed, unknown man, bearing only the gloomy mystery contained in that one word, miserrimus, "most miserable!"

But now drop these melancholy musings, and pass from Westminster Abbey to Bunhill Fields, or to the missionary's grave in some far-off land. No architectural grandeur raises its lofty arches there; no sculptor's chisel exhibits there the trophies and the triumphs of his art; no stained window tints with all the colours of the rainbow the tombs of the men who rest from their labours there, nor organ's solemn peal, nor white-robed choristers chant their requiem. No; but there are the tombs of the men whom God delights to honour, or the records of their doings. No stream of earthly visitors is ever flowing to those spots; but angels come down and join with holy men to look with interest upon the graves, read with delight their records, and say with reverent whisper to each other, "Here is the resting-place of Bunyan, here of Owen, and here of Watts. Here sleeps the holy Baxter, and there the serene and lofty Howe. Here are the names of Bogue and Burder, of Wilks and Waugh. Here is the sepulchre of Schwartz or Carey, Martyn or Morrison; and here is the spot, without a grave, where fell the martyr Williams." And while we survey these memorials, no creeping horror chills the

blood, no agonised spectres rise before our terrified imagination, as we ask the question, "Where are they?" Every name is radiant with the light and glory of immortality: every tomb is vocal with the echoes of inspiration, and to the question of the text responds, "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord; for they rest from their labours, and their works do follow them." There they are, assembled in the presence of their Lord, rejoicing with ineffable delight in their mutual recognition, in their sublime intercourse, and in their joint adoration.

2. Their names, their character, and their examples still survive. These have not perished, should not perish, cannot, shall not. Eminent piety, combined with eminent usefulness, retains, like the rose, its beauty and its fragrance after death. The Egyptians, with a strange fondness, embalmed and preserved the bodies of their departed friends: with more rational and profitable care, let us preserve, by embalming, the character of ours. Could we arrest the disembodied spirit of one of our heaven-bound friends, when it had thrown off the last taint of corruption, and was clad in the spotless garment of the immortals, and could we hold daily intercourse with it, and catch the inspirations to holiness and zeal which such elevated communion would impart, how powerful an auxiliary to our spiritual improvement should we seem to have gained!

> "Forgive, blest shade, the tributary tear,
> That mourn'd thy exit from a world like this;
> Forgive the wish that would have kept thee here,
> And stay'd thy passage to the realms of bliss."

No, they cannot remain. But we have their characters

and their examples; and in these we have the best part of themselves. There is this value in holy excellence, it goes itself to heaven to be perfect and eternal; but as it ascends to the skies, it lets fall its image instead of its mantle, to be copied by the aid of memory into the heart and character of all who survive. The remembrance of departed piety is sometimes more serviceable than even the contemplation of it was while it was yet living. In thinking upon the memory of the pious dead, the heart is softened by sorrow to receive the impression of their virtues; the eye, less clouded by envy, discerns them more clearly; while affection, ever prone to canonize its objects, now, by a refined and generous abstraction, sees them without their faults.

My brethren, let us call to remembrance the fathers and founders of our Society, in whom, if there wanted Ionic grace and Corinthian splendour, there was a Doric strength, simplicity, and grandeur which made you feel how awful goodness is. Shall I remind you of Bogue, whose athletic person was but the type of the still more powerful soul which animated it, a soul replenished not with the elegances of literature, or the speculations of philosophy, or the subtleties of metaphysics, but with the great principles of the gospel, and with mighty energies to enforce them? When he rose to plead the cause of missions, he seemed a living embodiment of our Society. His speech was with the force and impetuosity, and something of the roughness, of a mountain torrent. You heard no splendid diction, no dazzling metaphors, no ebullitions of genius, no mellifluous tones; but there was the eloquence of a burning heart, which caused you to hear the cries and feel the miseries of the perishing heathen. You were too much absorbed in

his subject to think of the speaker, you felt too deeply and too solemnly to give audible utterance to your emotions, and would have deemed our modern fashion of noisy applause as much out of place as would have been the clapping of hands after Paul's speech to the philosophers of Athens on Mars Hill; and you went away, not talking to your neighbour about the goodness of the meeting, or the eloquence of the speakers, but saying to yourself, "I must after this do something more for the conversion of the world." Then, who that knew Waugh can forget that man of love, whose amenity won all hearts, even as his playful wit and silvery eloquence captivated all minds; or Wilks, under whose somewhat rough and repulsive exterior was concealed one of the noblest and most generous hearts which God ever lodged in a human bosom; or Burder, whose beautiful simplicity was power, operating by the meekness of wisdom; or Hill, whose very eccentricities were but the fantastic wreaths of smoke that rose over the fire of zeal and benevolence which glowed within him? If I speak little of Haweis, of Eyre, Love, and Brooksbank, and Greathead, names to be repeated with affection by all who value our Institution, it is because time would fail me to enumerate them, and because I knew them only as matters of history. But I cannot omit those noble-hearted men belonging to the city "whose merchants are princes," men who brought from their counting-houses, their banking-houses, and their offices both wisdom and wealth to our cause, and without whom even the men of the pulpit could have done nothing, Hardcastle, Wilson, Simms, Stephen, Shrubsole, Hankey, and others, who exhibited such bright patterns of that lofty style of renewed humanity, the religious man

of business, the man deeply engaged in the affairs of both worlds, who, while he carries on his commerce to the ends of the earth, by the spirit of his dealings inscribes upon his merchandise "Holiness to the Lord!" But had London the unshared honour of originating the cause? Had the provinces nothing to do with it? Besides Bogue, the originator of the Institution, were there not Williams, and the venerable Jay, the father of us all, (a paternity of which we are not ashamed,) and Roby, and Griffin, and Boden, and Townsend, and Bennet, and a long list of others? Think me not tedious in this recital. With you who knew the men there is no danger of this; and you who did not know them, must forgive this poor but loving effusion of a heart that did. And shall I pass over your officials? Besides Love and Burder, already mentioned, there were the patient and plodding Arundel, the intelligent and large-hearted Orme, and Ellis, your first missionary, then your secretary, and now your historian. Oh, what men we have had! what men we have lost! But, thank God, over all these wrecks of mortality I can exultingly say, what men we still have! No, brethren, we are not left destitute. Death has swept our pulpits and the benches of our Mission House, but the Spirit of the living God has again replenished them; and were it decorous, and did not savour of flattery, I would make these walls echo, and your hearts vibrate, with the names of living men who are still your advocates, your directors, and your secretaries.

3. The principles on which these worthies acted survive. These they derived from the Bible, and not from any human theories of civilisation, philosophy, or philanthropy. They founded the Society on the basis of the

word of God, determined that it should stand or fall by that. Yes, my brethren, the Bible is the central luminary around which all Christian churches and all Christian missions revolve, in nearer or remoter orbits, reflecting the splendour of its beams, and governed by the power of its attraction. To extinguish, if possible, this orb, has been the object of the power and policy of hell in every age. What was said of the church on a similar occasion to this forty-seven years ago, by Dr. Mason of New York, may with equal force be said of God's truth, "To blot out her memorial from the earth, the most furious efforts of fanaticism, the most sanguinary arts of statesmen, the concentrated strength of empires, have been frequently and perseveringly applied. The tribes of persecution have sported over her woes, and erected monuments as they imagined to her perpetual ruin. But where are her tyrants, and where are their empires? The tyrants have long since gone to their own place, and their empires have passed like shadows over a rock. But what became of the truth? She rose from her ashes fresh in beauty and in might, celestial glory beamed around her. She dashed down the monumental marble of her foes, and they who hated her fled before her. She has celebrated the funerals of kings and priests, philosophers, infidels, and heresiarchs who plotted her destruction, and, with the inscriptions of their pride, has transmitted to posterity the records of their shame and her own victories." And here she is in the midst of us this day, in all the beauty and power of her heavenly birth, and all the freshness and vigour of her immortal youth, beckoning us onward to fight her battles, to achieve her victories, and plant her standards from the equator to the poles! The last

enemy, with his iron sceptre, has from age to age dashed in pieces the earthen vessel which contained the heavenly treasure, but not a particle of that was destroyed by the blow.

Your fathers when they died left you an unmutilated Bible. Not a single promise lies interred in their graves. The Bible, the whole Bible, which was laid by them as the basis of the Society, remains to support it for us.

But in some cases the Bible is professed while its truths are denied: it is, in a certain way, held in gross, while it is rejected in detail. Our fathers dealt not in vague generalities, philosophical speculations, or in evasive reserves. The evangelical system, in all its purity and simplicity, in all its length, depth, breadth, and height, was their profession and their glory. The divinity of the Son and of the Spirit, the atonement of the cross, justification by faith, the necessity of divine influence for the illumination and regeneration of the soul of man, and the sovereignty of divine grace in the sinner's salvation, were the views of divine truth which kindled their zeal, inspired their energies, and aroused them to the achievement of the earth's conversion. And these have been the principles which alone have been ever found of any power in renovating the moral world. Churches have been known in modern times which have held the ancient symbols of these truths, while they have practically denied the truths themselves. The scenes of Calvin's and of Luther's labours bear melancholy testimony to this, where a semi-infidel rationalism had supplanted the doctrines of the great reformers, even before their creed was formally abjured. But there is vitality in truth. Neither the sword of the tyrant, nor

the pen of the infidel can slay it. From both it is safe, under the protection of its divine Author. It still lives in the very region of death, incorruptible, indestructible, immortal. The seed which the Egyptians buried with their mummies, though enclosed in the catacomb, though held in the grasp or laid in the bosom of death for thousands of years, still retains its germ of vitality; and on being exhumed after its long interment, sowed in congenial soil, and exposed to the action of the heavens, vegetates as certainly and as luxuriantly as if but yesterday it had dropped from the plant. What are some churches but ecclesiastical mummies, in which the incorruptible seed of the kingdom has been shut up for ages in the icy hand of death, yet all the while retaining its own imperishable life, and when brought out from its grave, and sown in the earth, displaying its power and producing its kind? The doctrine of justification by faith, when brought by Luther out of the catacomb of Rome, was as vigorous and fruitful as when first preached by the great apostle of the Gentiles. Yes; and though now entombed in the rationalism of the continent, or the Puseyism of our country, it preserves even there the living germ, and shall come forth to prove its power and to produce its fruit.

4. Though the founders of the Society have long since departed, the cause itself, which was the object of their living labours and of their dying prayers and hopes still survives. At the time of its formation, scoffing infidels asserted, and timid Christians feared, that it was but a bubble of religious enthusiasm, which would explode over the tombs of those who raised it. Men who turn prophets should make sure of their inspiration. Our ancestors have rested from their labours; but we

have entered into them. They did not build a Babel; and we are not dispersed tribes whom different dialects have scattered from the work, leaving the frustrated and deserted scheme to be a monument of their folly and the matter of our shame. On the contrary, they raised a Pharos to be the light of the world, the lamps of which are still kept burning by ourselves. They laid the catholic basis of the society, which we have not narrowed. They stretched out the hand of fraternal affection and Christian fellowship to the members of the Church of England, which we did not draw back till, by prelatical bigotry and infatuation, it had been contumeliously refused.* They adopted the world as the field of their operations, which we have not contracted. They planted missions in Polynesia, Africa, India, and China, which we have not abandoned. They raised an income of ten or twelve thousand a year, and predicted that the time might possibly arrive when the liberality of the church would be so far enlarged as to reach twenty thousand: we now raise nearly seventy thousand. They numbered their agents first by tens, and then by scores: we count ours by hundreds. They laboured long with scarcely a single convert: we have lived to bless God for myriads. They had government, literature, fashion against them: we, through God's overruling providence, have all these with us. They had to contend with head-winds from the prejudices of the age, of the nation, and in part of the church: our sails are filled with the breezes of popular applause, and our bark is floated on-

* By Blomfield, Bishop successively of Chester and London, who throughout his meddling, trimming, grasping life, was consistent only in his insolence to Nonconformists. He once referred to the Author as "their chief Mufti." Ed.

ward by a favourable tide. Does the infidel ask in derision what has become of the cause since the fathers fell asleep, and tauntingly say, "Where is it?" Where? Here this day in the midst of us, not its tomb, not its skeleton, not its monument, not its ghost, but its living veritable self, in all the vigour of its strength and all the fulness of its growth, with no wrinkle on its brow, with its hair unbleached, its eye undimmed, its step unfaltering. Where? In the hearts of these pastors and of these churches. Where? In every city, town, and village of this empire. Where? In the islands of the South Sea, in the wilds of Africa, in the islands of the West Indies, on the plains of India, and in the cities of China. Where? In the heart of God, in the councils of heaven, in the schemes of Providence, in the predictions of prophets, in the design of the cross. Where? Anywhere, everywhere, but in its grave.

III. This leads us to consider, in the THIRD division of our subject, the means to be employed by this generation, and those which are to come after us, to carry on the work begun by our forefathers.

We exult that it yet lives. But will it continue and abide with us? Will it stand? Men of weak nerve fear, and others of scornful disposition predict, it will not. We are told that men's affections will cool when the charms of novelty have faded. They have faded. The society is in the second jubilee of its existence; yet its fascination is as great, and its spell as powerful, as when it was in all the bloom and beauty of its youth. Excitement, we are told, will exhaust itself. Very likely; but the judgment will become more enlightened, and the conscience more tender. The world will grow tired of it, then the church will cling the closer to it. It will

fail to interest on the platform, then it will retire to its stronghold in the pulpit. Men will become weary of speeches, then Christians must become more earnest in prayer. How mighty was the cause (it was never more so) when Carey, Fuller, Sutcliffe, Ryland, and Pearce, met in the little room at Kettering; and when Waugh, Wilks, Eyre, and Love assembled with others at the Castle and Falcon, to confer and pray over the world's conversion, and devise a scheme for that purpose! How strong were they in faith, how mighty in prayer, how solemn in discourse, and how like the apostles on that day when, in the upper chamber at Jerusalem, tongues of fire sat upon each one of them! Oh that some invisible but recording pen had been there, to note down the words of truth and soberness which fell from their lips, and expressed the emotions of their glowing hearts! No trooping multitudes were there, moved rather by a love of eloquence than a love of souls; no oratory shook the place, and called forth thunders of applause; but by the ear of faith was heard the sound of a rushing mighty wind filling the house, accompanied by a baptism of the Spirit to fit them for their great enterprise. I could almost spare the august scenes of Exeter Hall for such devout and holy exercises as these; and perhaps the society is now only in the chrysalis state of existence, from which, when it has cast off the slough of its present imperfect envelopment, it will emerge at some future period in a more perfect, beautiful, and apostolic form, uniting the faith and spirituality of its earlier history with the magnitude, extent, and splendour of its later scenes.

But will not public attention be diverted from the cause by the surpassingly great, various, and absorbing

events of the times in which we live? In science, the arts, polities and trading adventures, so many wonderful things are presented to our notice that nothing now is surprising. We cease to wonder at anything. The astonishment which each event is calculated to produce is kept down by the expectation of something still greater to come. We live amidst such perpetual excitement that we think a month dull and stagnant which does not produce a new revolution, and throw down the newspaper in disgust which does not open to us a new chapter in human affairs; and at this present moment we are watching the dark and awful clouds which in such portentous masses are rolling and rumbling along our troubled horizon, and portending another great European tempest. Such a condition of existence has the danger of rendering the ordinary occupations, duties, and enjoyments of life tame, spiritless, and insipid. This is true in regard to our personal religion, our domestic constitution, and equally so in regard to our support of the missionary enterprise; for what, in the estimation of many, is the conversion of a few savages in Africa, or a few Brahmins in India, or a few Chinese in the Celestial Empire, compared with a revolution in France, the setting up of a new constitution in Germany, the deposition of the Pope, the subversion of monarchies, and the progress of freedom?

Christians, shall these things be allowed to extinguish your interest in missions, divert your attention from them, or paralyze your exertions on their behalf? Learn of your fathers. When the venerable men to whom I have alluded went forth to lay the foundations of the Baptist Mission, all Europe was tremulous with the earthquake of the Gallican Revolution; atheism was

performing its dreadful tragedy on the darkened theatre of France, and the "reign of terror" was filling that country with blood, and other lands with disgust, terror, and dismay; and when our own society was formed, Britain was in danger of being suffocated with the smoke, and buried in the ashes of the dreadful volcanic eruption which was then pouring its burning lava over the nations of the Continent. Yet then did our fathers find leisure so far to escape from the influence of passing events, as to form the society which we are met this day to support. And how great and wonderful have been the changes which in every part of Europe have been going on ever since. With what extraordinary rapidity have the scenes been shifted during the last half century, the term of the society's existence, as if the great drama of Providence were coming to a close. Born amidst the convulsions of an earthquake, cradled beneath a burning volcano, educated amidst tempests and thunderings and lightnings, it seems called, trained, and marked by God, with others, for some grand achievement in the destiny of the nations.

It is a most remarkable, instructive, and impressive feature of the times that there is a conspicuous parallelism between political convulsion and social disorganization on the one hand, and moral action and reformation on the other, between the destructive and constructive forces, between the shaking and crumbling of the things that are ready to vanish away, and the rising up of those things which cannot be shaken and are intended to remain. To me it is inexpressibly delightful to see with what steady perseverance the Missionary Society has hitherto pursued its commission. Neither the arts of peace, nor the alarms of war; neither the

dread of foreign invasion, nor the fear of intestine commotion; neither the panic of commercial crises, nor the crash of falling banks; neither the conflict of political principles, nor the struggles of political parties; neither the rage of controversy, nor the progress of reform, have caused the directors to pause in their career; nor when kings were tumbling from their thrones, and crowns were rolling in the dust, and sceptres were breaking as rotten staves in the hands of the multitude, has the poor savage perishing in his sins at the ends of the earth been forsaken or forgotten, or the missionary instructing him in the way of salvation been neglected? And shall we forget and forsake them now?

Shall we of this age suffer passing events to draw off our attention from the cause of Christian missions? Why this would be to lose our interest in the cause, when all things seem preparing the world for its full and final triumph. The Redeemer is about to take to himself his great power and reign. If the convulsions of our times, are not (as perhaps they are not) the thundering roll of the mighty wheels of his approaching chariot, they are at any rate blasting the rocks, and tumbling them into the valleys, by which in his sublime plan he is preparing the grand moral railway of the globe, which following the line of the equator, and diverging on either hand to the poles, shall open and facilitate a communion between the extremest nations of the earth, and shall bring them near to each other not only in neighbourhood but in fellowship, till his glory shall be revealed, and all flesh see it together. If all the kingdoms of the world, and our own amongst the number, were the next hour to be dissolved, grasping the Bible in one hand and the Missionary Report in the

other, and standing upon the ruins of empires, I would exclaim, "Friends of Immanuel, slacken not in the missionary enterprise, for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh."

IV. Still, with the greatest confidence in the Society's continuance, we must unite appropriate and adequate means, especially if we desire its extended usefulness; and it will be my business, during the remainder of this discourse, to point out what these means are

1. A more intelligent apprehension, a deeper conviction, and a more solemn sense, on the part of the whole church, of the design of God in its erection and continuance in this world, as his witness and instrument for the conversion of the nations. Our Lord Jesus Christ, in his memorable prayer on the eve of his passion, constituted his church on earth one vast missionary society, and laid upon it the burden of prosecuting and carrying out his ministry when he should have returned to his Father. This is her great business, to be his apostle to carry salvation to the ends of the earth. Not merely to be a stationary witness, like the Jewish Theocracy, but to be a moving luminary which shall carry the light of truth into the whole realm of darkness and of death. Her own conservation in truth and holiness is but one-half of her duty; the other is to extend herself throughout the world. No longer than she is pursuing this object, is she answering the end of her existence or the design of her Founder. In so far as she is a missionary church, she is a true church, and no farther. What is the duty of the whole church is the duty of every section and part of it; and that denomination which has most of the missionary spirit has most of the apostolic genius

and the true succession; still following on this analysis, every congregation should be a home and foreign missionary society in itself; and, coming down to the constituent elements of every particular church, no man is a worthy member, or sustains a consistent profession, in whom dwells not the spirit of holy zeal for the spread of the gospel. As every Christian must be a martyr in spirit, though he may not be called to lay his head upon the block, or have his body chained to the stake, so must he be a missionary in spirit, though he may not be called to go to foreign lands to preach the gospel.

The church, as such, has not yet done, and is not even now doing, her duty. She has devolved too much of the work of converting the world upon whomsoever would undertake it, and has given it too much out of her own hands. She must take it up afresh, as peculiarly her work. She has protected, or attempted to protect, her orthodoxy by articles of faith; she must guard her consistency by articles of practice. She is vigilant against theoretic error; she must be no less so against practical heresy. She rejects from her communion the man who denies the doctrine of the atonement; why should she not equally require a belief in the practical design of the atonement? That a man may be a very good man, in such an age as this, and feel no deep concern, and make no proportionate effort, for the conversion of the world, is a practical heresy of the deepest die. Over the portals of every church should be written in large and legible characters, "No man liveth to himself;" and none should be permitted to step across the threshold who is not prepared ex animo to subscribe to the sentiment, that the missionary spirit is not something adventitious to our religion, an article of taste to

decorate its attire, or a chaplet of beauty to adorn its brow, but is our religion itself; the expression of our belief in the gospel, and of our submission to the law; the flaming out of the hidden fire of divine love in our hearts: and wherever and by whomsoever our religion is taught, it must be taught thus. This is to make the church, and not any specific organization, the conservator of the missionary cause; so that if our society were to perish to-morrow, another would soon rise, phœnix-like, from its ashes, in new life, vigour, and beauty. It is not the society only that we owe to our fathers, but the revival of the principle on which it is founded, and of which it is the embodiment, that the design and business of the church are the conversion of the world; and it is this principle that we of this age must hand down to the next. "Church of the living God, awake, awake! All things wait for thee. The night is gone; the day is breaking; and all things wait for thee. Prophets have forecast thy glory; apostles have laboured for thine advancement; martyrs have bled in thy cause; and Providence, by ages of severest discipline, has been preparing thee for ages of truth and joy. Events are thine. Merchandise spreads her sails for thee. Knowledge trims her lamp for thee. Avarice hoards his treasures for thee. Temperance curbs the unruly appetite for thee. Liberty prepares her throne for thee. Slavery and crime scowl and mutter, and shrink away at sight of thee. Things visible and invisible wait for thee. Church of the living God, awake, awake!"

2. If then our zeal be the offspring of our piety, the next thing necessary for the continuance and extension of the missionary enterprise is an increase of spiritual

religion. I am not ignorant or unmindful of what our society and other societies have done in the great work of the world's regeneration. The results of modern missions collected into one view, as was done a few years ago by Mr. Malcolm, an American missionary, present a total which cannot be contemplated without feelings of adoring wonder, gratitude, and love. It resembles the labour employed to cultivate an immense waste. The ground is marked out and enclosed. Here are some burning off the heath, the furze, and the brushwood upon the surface; and there are others driving the plough. A little farther on is the sower casting the seed; and in some places are to be observed patches of springing corn. All is the activity and hope of seed time. Over such a scene, compared with what it presented a few years ago, when the reign of universal barrenness was unbroken by a single sight or sound of moral cultivation, we ought not to utter strains resembling the raven-croak of despair sent forth from a blasted oak amidst a region of desolation; but rather such as should imitate the carol of the lark, giving forth, as it has been said, his sunbeam of sound in reply to the newly-risen lord of the day, the leader of the harmonies at once of heaven and earth. Yes, if only a tenth part of what we have seen accomplished had been effected, it would have been more than enough as a reward for ten times the expense and the labour which we have incurred.

But still there is another comparison of our achievements to be made; and that is with what is yet to be done. And in reference to this, we are ready almost in cheerlessness to say with the ancient church, "We have not wrought any deliverance." We are in the second

jubilee of our existence; we have an empire on which the sun never sets; we have had ships, colonies, and commerce; we have had science and the arts assisting us; we have spent a million of money; we have sacrificed hundreds of precious lives; we have awakened the attention of the whole earth to our doings; and how is it we have not done more? At the rate we are going on the world can never be converted. Pagans and Mohammedans are born a hundred times faster than they are converted to Christ. Tell me not that God does not despise the day of small things. Neither do I; but, like God, I desire the day of great things. There is such a thing, I know, as being too discontented with partial success; so there is of being too contented with it. Why, if half the population of the globe were converted to Christ, I should be thankful, but not satisfied till the other half were converted too. I have a sympathy with Christ in the desires of his capacious heart; and of him it is said, "He shall see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied." What satisfies him shall satisfy me, and nothing less; and that is, I am sure, the subjugation of the whole world. He is working, waiting, expecting, till all his enemies become his footstool. Satisfied! Tell the hardy sons of ocean to be contented when they have saved a part of the crew from a wreck. With a humanity boisterous as the storm which they are braving, and tough as the life-boat in which they ride the billows, they will be ready to fling you into the sea for your cruelty, and exclaim, "Satisfied! no, never, till the last seaman is safe ashore." Satisfied with what we have done! It is the pettiness of our ambition which stints our liberality, our prayers, our faith. Oh for the plenary inspiration of Carey's

immortal aphorism, "Attempt great things, expect great things!" Let us take up as our motto, "The world for Christ."

But what must the church be, as to her spiritual condition, to act up to such a vocation? What then is wanted? What? More faith and more prayer, and in order to that more piety. We want a better church to make a better world. Without a better church we cannot have a much better world; and with a better church we should have a better world. We want more religion for ourselves; we need more to keep what we have; we need more for the wonderful age in which we live to fit us for our duty to that; and we need more for the great missionary work to which we are called. The conversion of a world is a mighty achievement, and requires the most robust and athletic piety, aye, something more than a correct system of church polity and a faultless orthodoxy, something far beyond lifeless formalism and conventional decorum. We want intelligence warmed with holy enthusiasm, and enthusiasm guided by intelligence; a religion of life, of power, of love, and of a sound mind; a religion combining something of the enthusiasm of prophets, the zeal of apostles, the self-denial of pilgrims, and the constancy of martyrs. Our churches must be composed of members strong in faith and fervent in prayer, of members separated from the world, spiritually-minded, self-denying, rejoicing in hope, and waiting, looking, and longing for, the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ; of members who consider this world not so much a place for present gratification as of discipline, probation, and preparation for future glory; of members

carrying something of the devotion of the cloister into the activities of the committee-room and public meeting, and carrying back the cause from the platform to the closet; and feeling as if the eloquence of a thousand speeches would do less for us than the power of a single, fervent, and believing prayer. We cannot convert the world as we now are. We may and shall do something. We have done something; but we ought to do more. We may have the blessing; but unless we become more earnest in piety, we shall not have the fulness of the blessing. We may lay the wave sheaf upon the altar; but we shall do little towards gathering in the harvest. We have done lesser things; but we have not cast out the demon from a possessed, convulsed, and tortured world. And why could we not cast him out? Our Lord shall answer the question: "This kind goeth not forth but by fasting and prayer." We want money, I know; we want men, I know; but there is something we want more than either, and which, if we had it, would give us more of both these, and that is faith and prayer. It was once said by an orator upon our platform, "Money, money, money is the life's blood of the missionary cause." Jealous for the honour of the Lord the Spirit, I liked not the expression; but granting its truth, still the spirit of faith is the animating soul, without which the blood itself will stagnate at the heart, and the whole body lie a lifeless corpse; and prayer is the vocal organ, without which, though the vital spark were not extinguished, even the living form will put forth nothing but the gestures and contortions of the poor mute, instead of the intelligence, the eloquence, and the influence of the speaking man. We have risen

up mighty in organization; but even this will do little for us, except we be also mighty in supplication. Organization, without believing prayer for the Spirit's power, is motionless. In Ezekiel's vision the impulsive spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels also.

It is an obvious fact, which may be gathered from the very nature of things, as well as from every part of the word of God and every page of ecclesiastical history, that eminent piety is essential to eminent usefulness, and that it is only to an age or to a church which has made high attainments in this that the honour of distinguished success will be granted. It is this alone which will enable us to take a clear and impressive view of the object to be sought, or supply the energies necessary for obtaining it, this alone which will purify our motives, and produce that spirit of profound humility, self-denial, dependence, and entire consecration which are necessary to qualify us for the work, this alone which will keep up the spirit of faith and prayer to which the divine promises are made. It is perfectly evident that the church is not yet in a condition for this great work of reducing a revolted world into submission to Christ. It may not be possible for us to determine, with any precision, its exact state in this respect, as compared with past ages. There are many who are of opinion that, under a great show of outward profession there is a lamentable deficiency of vital godliness; and that even the prevailing benevolence and activity of the age are more a passion than a principle; a substitute for spiritual religion, rather than the working and expression of it: and it must be confessed that the tone, spirit, and appearance of our public meetings give

too much reason for suspecting this. It is impossible not to perceive how much the love of eloquence predominates over the love of instruction, how much less welcome the serious is than the humorous, how much more anxious the audience is to be entertained than to be edified, and how much greater homage is paid to genius and talent than to piety, till, in fact, our public meetings sometimes assume rather the character of religious amusements than religious ordinances. No doubt a greater latitude is allowed to such engagements than to the service of the sanctuary, and a strain of remark may be lawful on the platform which would be out of place in the pulpit. We want, it is true, speeches, not sermons, for the platform, and sermons rather than speeches for the pulpit; but it would be an improvement in both, if the sermon partook more of the oration, and the oration more of the sermon. Seriousness without gloom, cheerfulness without merriment; the bliss, the sanctity, and the solemnity of religion; and all this combined with the pleasures of friendship and the chastened delights of Christian fellowship, such are the characteristics we should seek for our public meetings. It ought never to be forgotten that a missionary meeting, if rightly understood, is a company of persons brought together to carry out the design for which the Son of God expired upon the cross, to pity the miseries of a perishing world, and to save millions of immortal souls from eternal perdition; and surely the frame of our minds, and the tone of the speeches, and the spirit and tendency of the whole proceedings, ought to be in strict harmony with such a purpose.

It has been a question with some whether, (indis-

pensable as they are in the working of our missionary schemes as now constituted,) our missionary meetings have not rather lowered than elevated the tone of our piety, and thus enfeebled our real strength for carrying on this great work. Instead of sending us to our closets in the spirit of earnest wrestling with God, they have made us satisfied with these associated expressions of our zeal. We have been contented to hear speeches, instead of presenting prayers; we have loved the excitement produced by congregated thousands, instead of the deep musings and earnest breathings of the solitary suppliant alone with God: and yet the one prayer of that retired petitioner, though it were a poor bedridden widow, may have done more to forward the cause than the speech of an eloquent orator, which at the time captivated the imagination and entranced the feelings of thousands.

It is too much forgotten that it is the spirit of faith and prayer, gathering to itself all things necessary in the way of means and instruments, that is to convert the world from the error of its ways. Let us then make ourselves ready, which we yet are not, for the great work which is committed to us. Let us become more devout, more prayerful, more holy, more heavenly, more spiritual. Let us mortify our members which are upon the earth, and crucify the flesh, with the affections and lusts thereof. Let us all consider, each for himself, that we of this age are called to the greatest work ever entrusted to any generation since the days of the apostles; and that for such a commission there requires a far higher degree of personal religion than the church at present possesses, and that to attain to this should be her immediate business, labour, and prayer. I

repeat the declaration, "We cannot convert the world as we are, for this kind goeth not forth but by fasting and prayer."*

If then we would keep alive the missionary spirit, if we would perpetuate our enterprise, especially if we would well occupy the sphere which we have marked out for ourselves, (being five times the diameter of that of the apostles,) we must fill the land with calls for a revival of our own religion. Ministers of the gospel, let us go home from this anniversary, first to trim the lamps of the pulpit, and then those of the sanctuary. A revived church is the best hope of a lost world, a revived ministry the best hope of a dormant church; and "Thou, Eternal Spirit, art the only hope of all. Oh, baptise us afresh with thy celestial influence, that, strong in thy sevenfold energy, we may consecrate ourselves afresh to the work to which thou hast called us, of converting the nations to the faith of Christ!"

3. But, if the lamp of zeal must be fed by the oil of piety, and if its flame in brightness and intensity will be in proportion to the purity and the adequate supply

* It is indeed a fearful truth, that our public meetings are somewhat perilous, unless their influence is purified and watched, to our personal piety. If the audience, composed chiefly of ministers and professors of religion, cannot either enjoy or endure devotional speeches, but can endure only eloquence, humour, and wit, is there not a danger of losing our seriousness, and having our devotional feeling extinguished by the anniversary meetings of our societies, which are now become almost as frequent as our Sabbaths? In these remarks, I know I condemn myself; and now in the review of my platform services (and they have not been unfrequent through a course of nearly half a century,) I lament that, though I have never, I believe, descended to broad farce or unrestrained humour, I have sometimes indulged in a strain of facetiousness, which I would avoid were I now beginning life.

of this, the purity of the sacred oil itself depends upon the maintenance in our colleges, pulpits, churches, and our literature, of a sound and scriptural theology. And, if I may be permitted to carry on the figure I would say, this precious material, which is to replenish the lamps of the seven golden candlesticks, and give light to a world sitting in darkness and in the region of the shadow of death, cannot be imported by literature from Athens, nor by formalism from Rome, no, nor by philosophy from Germany: but by a sincere, intelligent, and simple faith from Jerusalem of old. Not only our own society, but all other missionary institutions in existence, rose out of the theology of the evangelical system of doctrinal truth, in its simplicity, purity, and unphilosophised form, as promulgated by apostles, inscribed on the page of revelation, held by the universal church, wielded by reformers, and forming the substance and establishing the harmony of all Protestant confessions. No other doctrines could ever have called this society into existence, and none others will keep it in being.

Besides the men of weak nerve and strong fears, there are not wanting others who, from their observatory, tell us that a sceptical philosophy is rolling onward to interpose between the orb of pure evangelism and the church. It may be so, I am afraid it is so; but of one thing I am certain, and in that assurance I am as calm and confident as I am when looking upon the obscuration of the sun, that it will prove only an eclipse, but not an extinction; and an eclipse partial, and not total. The great luminary of evangelic truth, sustained, irradiated, and guided by the hand of its divine Author, will emerge from the shadow, and hold on its resplendent course, when the cause of its tem-

porary obscuration shall have passed away. Still, even this partial and temporary eclipse, should it occur, may be attended with disastrous consequences to the orthodoxy and efficiency of our ministry, the piety of our churches, and the support of our societies. The warmest friends of missions are not usually found amongst the men of innovation, speculation and philosophy. Such generally look coldly and carelessly from afar, and either stand wholly aloof or lend but a tardy and reluctant hand to the cause. Not that there is anything in the word "philosophy," or the thing itself, to fright us from our propriety. It is a good and beautiful word, and when based on sound principles, a better and still more beautiful thing. A true philosophy must ever be coincident with a sound theology. The gospel is full of philosophy; and is itself, in morals and religion, to control all philosophies, and to be controlled by none.

We hear much in our day about the adaptation of preaching to the taste and state of the times; and provided nothing more be meant by that word than a change in the mode of teaching, leaving the matter of teaching unaltered, and the same in all its parts as it came from the pens of apostles, it is very true there must be adaptation if we would succeed. The gospel is intended for a universal and perpetual religion, and in its truths is adapted alike to all ages, all nations, and all states of society. Here is a proof of its divinity. Provided the form and substance of truth be preserved in its beauty, life, and freedom, we are not for retaining the uncouth dress of the theological phraseology of the seventeenth century. We say, as we have said elsewhere, with the noble Chalmers, in one of the last productions of his mighty pen, "We do not need to take

down the framework of our existing orthodoxy either in theology or in science. All that we require is, that it shall become an animated framework by the breath of a new life infused into it. What we want is, that the very system of doctrine which we now have shall come to us not in word only, but also in power. What we want is, Puritanism in its earnestness, without its extravagance; its faith without its contempt of philosophy; its high and heavenlymindedness, without the baser admixture of its worldly politics and passions."

We need not imagine, dear brethren, that the Bible is an exhausted mine, and that we have nothing to do but circulate the precious metals which our forefathers dug up; but then, while digging for ourselves, and adding to the stock of spiritual bullion in the coffers of the church, let us not foolishly consider, and throw away, as counterfeit and base, all the fruit of their labours. If we are not implicitly to follow the great lights of past ages, which no wise man would contend for, none but a proud man would disdainfully turn from them, and none but a foolish one would extinguish them. There is one extreme of considering everything settled in theology and philosophy, and another of considering nothing settled. Observation and the records of experience may be of some service to us here; and we boldly appeal to the records of ecclestiastical history, from the time of the apostles to the present, whether it is not the doctrine of the cross, not shaped by philosophy, and carved and gilded by learning, but in its own beautiful simplicity, preached by men who, like Paul, gloried in it as the instrument of their conversion, as well as the theme of their teaching, that piety has been preserved in the church, and the church made the instrument of God for the conver-

sion of the world. What corrupt church was ever reformed, or what Pagan people was ever converted in any other way?

If then the spirit of missions be maintained in the ministry of our pastors and in the heart of our churches, if we would keep up that robust and healthful piety out of which the whole cause springs, it must be by the theology of Luther, Calvin, and Knox; of Leighton, Baxter, and Howe; of Scott, Simeon, and Newton; of Fuller and Robert Hall; of Jonathan Edwards and Dwight; of Williams and Payne; of Chalmers and Dick; of Wardlaw and Russell, men of different ages and various churches, but all one in fundamental truth. Let this go down, no matter what comes in its place, the cause of Christian missions will expire, and your Mission House will become a mausoleum, where your Society will lie entombed; or a museum, where its relics shall be exhibited to the curious; or anything in short but what it is now, the place of conference and of action for men who, with hearts constrained by the pure evangelism of the gospel, are intent upon the conversion of the world to Christ, and by that very evangelism are seeking to accomplish it. Let our ministers, and especially our young ministers, once imagine that their mission is not to the people in mass, but to the select few, to the intellectual, to the thinking young men, and that, in order to fulfil this, they must substitute philosophy in their discourses for Christianity, or at any rate that they must present Christianity recast in the mould of philosophy, to be exhibited as an elaboration of human intellect rather than a divine testimony, and they will from that moment place themselves in opposition to the declaration of our Lord, "that the poor have

the gospel preached unto them," and equally so to the resolution of the apostle who, in a philosophic age and country, determined to know nothing among men save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. The consequence will be that they, or others who come after them, will find, when it is too late to correct or to stop the mischief, that they are but imitating the experiment made at Alexandria, in the third century of the Christian era, and repeated in our days with such disastrous consequences on the continent of Europe; an experiment under the influence of which, sound orthodoxy, vital Christianity, and all missionary zeal, will form the same funeral procession and descend into the same grave, while our evangelising societies will follow in sackcloth as chief mourners in the melancholy obsequies.

4. Another thing of vital importance to the preservation and increased usefulness of our Society, is a careful, diligent, and practical regard to the well-being of our denomination.

In political affairs, a nation engaged in a war of invasion and subjugation must look well to its own internal condition, and to the union of its people, the prosperity of its finances, and the wisdom of its government. A nation weak at home can never be strong abroad. All the troops, munitions of war, and supplies for the army are drawn from home. My brethren, we have proclaimed war with all the idols of the world, and are invading the territories of Paganism over the face of the whole earth; and we must be strong at home, if we would be victorious abroad. The time will come, no doubt, when our missions will be self-supporting and self-propagating; and it should be our study, aim, and policy, to bring them to that state as soon as possible: but they are far

enough off from it at present. Our churches at home must for ages to come be the grand magazine to the world for money, men, and all the material of our spiritual warfare. Then what, I ask, ought to be the state of our body to carry on with vigour and success such a conflict? I do not mean to gainsay my own words already uttered in this discourse. I do not intend to excite the jealousy of the directors. I do not wish to divert your attention from, or weaken your affection for, the Missionary Society; but I do mean, intend, and wish, in the most public, explicit, and emphatic manner, to impress upon you the sentiment that your first and most anxious consideration should be directed to the state of your own denomination, as regards the orthodoxy of its theology, the efficiency of its ministry, the zeal, piety, intelligence of its members, the peaceable working of its principles, and the harmony of its churches; in short, to the compactness, strength, and growth of the whole body. I say this for your own sake, and no less for the sake of the Missionary Society. If you are weak, that is weak; if you are strong, it will be strong in you. No one, I believe, will suspect me of a want of catholicity of spirit: as far as I know myself, sectarian bigotry is not my besetting sin. I believe that the church must be more united before the world is converted. Truth and love are the two most powerful things in the universe; and it is by the silken cord of love, united with the golden thread of truth, that the church must draw the world to Christ. But then I am no advocate of the spurious philosophy which proposes to build up universal benevolence on the destruction of individual attachment, as if the way to love the whole more was to love each separate part less.

I say, then, to the pastors of our churches, and to their churches with them, Look well to yourselves. Let no multiplication of foreign objects divert your attention for a moment from your own condition. Be united, and be strong: strong, I mean, internally and spiritually, rather than externally and politically. I am far more anxious about the former than the latter. Control the centrifugal tendency of your principles by a strong centripetal force of vital godliness. Look well to the state of your ministry, and support it well. Sustain with liberality your colleges. Encourage your literature; and thus be ready and every way prepared to bear a conspicuous and honourable part in the evangelisation of your country and the world. Descendants of the Puritans! children of the Nonconformists! to your great ancestors Britain stands indebted in no small measure for her liberties; New England for its population, its Protestantism, and its freedom; and the world for much of its purest and richest theology, and its Christian missions to all nations. Disgrace not your lineage; be worthy of the men from whom you have descended; assert your principles with the courage of heroes and the constancy of martyrs, though at the same time with the holiness of saints, and the meekness and gentleness of Christ. Our denominational prosperity is, under God, to the Missionary Society, the source of its strength, the secret of its power; and if your churches, which are the springs and tributary streams of its vast reservoir, become fewer, smaller, and poorer, the supplies of this great cause will be suspended.

5. We now go on to the last particular; and thus advance to the close of a sermon, I am afraid, far too long for the patience of the hearers; and that is for a

few moments to show that the perpetuation of the missionary enterprise depends in no small measure upon the support given to it by the ministers of the Gospel.

The church, we admit, has a stewardship to perform, and one not wanting in grandeur, solemnity, or responsibility. But still more awful are the functions and accountability of the ministry; for if to the church is entrusted the salvation of the world, to the ministry is entrusted the conservation of the church. In repudiating the notion of a priesthood, in disclaiming and rejecting the absurdities connected with the communication of sacramental grace, and resolving our ministry into an office of instruction, persuasion, and example, we have immeasurably increased its difficulty, its responsibility, and its solemnity. How easy are the genuflexions, the invocations, and the manipulations of the Popish or Tractarian priest, compared with the mental anxiety and the spiritual labour of the Christian minister to keep up by the labour of studying, preaching, and exemplifying truth, right views and feelings in the minds and hearts of the people! It is the will of God, and in the order of nature, that there should be influence and power perpetually going forth from a minister to his people. We, dear brethren, cannot be neutral; we must do good or harm. Our situation is awful: our responsibility is tremendous. Our negative as well as our positive qualities must have an influence. It is enough to crush and overwhelm us, merely to think that hundreds, and in some cases thousands of immortal souls are brought every Sabbath-day to us to be instructed and moved; to be converted and sanctified; to be taught what to think, how to feel, how to act, not as rational creatures merely, but as moral agents, not as

mortals only, but as immortals, not only in reference to themselves, but to others. Yes, we mould the saint as well as convert the sinner. The pulpit is the centre of the moral universe, and is the object of deepest interest to three worlds; heaven, earth, and hell. To a considerable extent, it sustains and directs the destinies of both the church and the world. Hence, by an obvious deduction, it may be inferred, if the Missionary Society ever die, it will expire in the heart of the ministry, and be entombed in the pulpit; and should this ever be the case, its frowning ghost will haunt the studies of men whose neglect has caused the death of this evangelist of the world. Every church ought to be in spirit a missionary church; and so it would be if its pastor was a missionary man. If, instead of considering the missionary cause as the business of our people, we adopted it as our own, and, where God has blessed us with property, we were ahead of them in liberality, and did not consider our sermons as our only contributions to the cause; if, instead of trusting to the eloquent appeals of a deputation, or even to our own annual sermon, we interweaved the subject as we ought to do with the whole web of our pulpit ministrations; if, instead of confining it to the sanctuary, we took it to the houses of our friends, and breathed into them a missionary spirit in the social circle; if in everything we added all the power of example to all the force of persuasion, what might we not, by God's blessing, do in exciting and sustaining a right feeling in our people in reference to this cause! In a late battle in India, the following order was given: "Officers, take your position in front; lead on your troops." Such is the command of the Great Captain of our salvation to us ministers.

We must be in the front, not in the rear. We must lead in person, not merely direct. We must be seen in advance, giving the signal, and crying to those behind, "Onwards! follow!" Let us only do our part, and the people will not be wanting in theirs. By God's blessing, we may conduct them to any measure of zeal and liberality within reasonable bounds. Directors of the society! hold us bound to you as responsible for its support. Devolve the responsibility upon us. It belongs to us. God has laid it upon us. Our office commits us to it; and we dare not shrink from it, without being false to our ordination vows.

To you, my beloved young brethren, who are now the hope of our churches, and must soon be the successors of their declining pastors, I turn for a few moments, with an anxiety and an affection which no words could enable me to express. The preacher, with a few others who remain, are the connecting link between the men of the past who founded the society, and the men of the future who are to support it in the coming time. That precious trust which they bequeathed to us, we in our turn must soon bequeath, we would fain hope uninjured, to you. We have loved the cause, and endeavoured, however imperfectly, to serve it; and in doing this, we have but discharged a debt of gratitude. If we have gained any share of public esteem, if we have attained to any measure of usefulness, we owe it in some measure to this society. It was this which helped to lift us into notice, which fanned the spark of zeal in our youthful bosoms, and inspired us with what little earnestness we have manifested in the Christian ministry. The shadows of evening are gathering around us, our sun is touching the western horizon, and we are in a situation better

able, than amidst the heat and burden of the day, to estimate the relative value of all the objects of ministerial ambition; and now, while we are willing to bear our testimony to the subordinate importance of high scholarship and sound philosophy, (and some of us from a felt and lamented deficiency in these attainments,) we feel that these things, and everything else that could be added to them, are but as the small dust of the balance when weighed against the worth of souls, and the achievement of their salvation; and if, in the review of life, we had to look back upon any serious neglect of this, no matter what we had done in the acquisition or advancement of learning or science, we should repeat with a deeper sigh, and a more intense agony than his, the lament of Grotius, "I have consumed much of my time in laboriously doing nothing."

Forgive me, my young brethren, if this appeal breathes any suspicion of your attachment to this glorious cause: love for it, and for you, makes me anxious, and impels me to ask, "Will you ever forsake it?" Where can you find anything in grandeur so sublime, in beauty so fascinating? Shall the amenities of literature, the speculations of philosophy, the productions of genius, have any power to seduce you from the stupendous objects presented by the cause of Christian missions? What, shall neither the loud deep groans of an unconverted world, nor the anticipated and triumphant shout of a redeemed one, have power to draw you from the retreat of the study into the field where heaven and hell are conflicting for the possession of our earth?

Consider, I beseech you, your advantages. You have not either to create a public sentiment in favour of missions, or to form and embody it into an organization.

This is all done to your hand. The machinery is constructed, the mighty engine is at work; and all you have to do is to keep it going with such improvements as you can invent. Consider the circumstances of the times in which you have come upon the stage. By signs better understood than apocalyptic seals, vials, and trumpets, we learn that the hour of travail has come upon the world, and that some great moral birth is soon to be announced as having taken place. Providence is disclosing some of its grandest secrets, and performing some of its noblest works. You will witness greater things than we have seen, and will be called to join in more stupendous operations. To be destitute, in such an age, of public spirit, would be sullenly to refuse your sympathy with God in the greatest of his doings, to shrink into littleness when everything combines to magnify your importance, and to remain torpid at the centre of universal excitement. It would be to recline in the chair of ease, or on the couch of voluptuous repose, when the sacramental host is marching to battle and to victory beneath your windows, to the song of the seraphim, and amidst the shouts of applauding multitudes.

Young ministers! the eyes of all turn to you. The directors of the Missionary Society turn to you, the declining pastors of the churches turn to you, the missionaries and mission churches which they have planted turn to you, the idolatrous nations of the earth turn to you, the fathers and the founders of the society from their elevated seats of glory turn to you. The triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, calls on you. Will you disappoint such hopes, refuse such appeals?

Beneath the pulpit which I now occupy lie the ashes, and behind it is placed the monumental record of one

of the most ardent of the fathers of our cause.* Over those ashes, around that marble bust, in view of those sculptured emblems of your ministry, and with the inscription recording his excellence before you, swear by him that liveth for ever and ever that you will never abandon this great enterprise.

We take your pledge; we confide in you; we dismiss our solicitude; we will spend what remains of the evening of life in greater serenity; our declining sun shall go down more free from clouds, now that we see a pledged, devoted band of young men rising up to take our places when we shall have joined the fathers that were, but are not.

> "High heaven that heard the solemn vow,
> That vow renew'd shall daily hear,
> Till in life's latest hour you bow,
> And bless in death a bond so dear."

And now what remains but that, leaving the fields where the fathers laboured, and the tombs where the prophets slumber, and even passing over the millennial beauties of a renovated world, we anticipate that illustrious morning when, every other foe having been vanquished, the last enemy shall be destroyed, and emancipated millions, bursting from the fetters of the tomb, shall raise the last and loudest shout of the Redeemer's triumph, "Death is swallowed up in victory!" Then, high on the great white throne, the Lord

* Rowland Hill is here referred to, at whose interment it may be mentioned the Author delivered the address. This office devolved upon him in right, not only of the long friendship which subsisted between them, but of the still stronger attachment which existed between Mr and Mrs Hill and the Author's second wife, when Mrs Benjamin Neale.

Jesus, with infinite satisfaction, shall see of the travail of his soul, and gather into his presence all whom he has employed in carrying out the plan of his redeeming work. What a convocation will then assemble! There will be the goodly fellowship of the prophets, the glorious company of the apostles, and the noble army of martyrs. There will be the reformers, the missionaries, the ministers of every age, and every country, and every church. There, like co-workers in some stupendous enterprise assembled to celebrate together its successful completion, or like a company of warriors and heroes collected in the palace of their sovereign to enjoy a banquet in commemoration of a victory, will all the servants of Jesus assemble from every department of hallowed labour. No voice need then ask, "Your fathers, where are they?" There they are arrayed in glory, honour, and immortality. What blissful recognitions, what enraptured gratulations and sublime communications will take place at that interview! The very anticipation, is it not almost overwhelming? Then shall it be seen who are the men whom the King of Kings delighteth to honour; and when monarchs and statesmen, warriors and heroes, philosophers and scholars, poets and historians, who knew not God, and served not his cause, shall be passed by without a glance, or be swept away with the refuse of the nations, the fathers, the founders, the directors and supporters of this blessed cause shall be seen, with amazement and envy by these mighty ones of the earth, united to their Lord, covered with his glory, and seated on his throne.

Illustrious day! thine it is to close the dispensations of earth, of time, and grace, and to open those of heaven, and glory, and eternity; thine to justify the ways of

Providence to men, and clear up every mystery which now confounds our reason and sometimes staggers our faith; thine to fulfil the expectations, to terminate the sufferings, and exhibit the perfection of God's redeemed church; thine to reveal the glory, to consummate the mission, and adorn with its brightest honours the crown of Immanuel! Hasten, glad day, thy coming! For thine arrival, and the manifestation of the glorious liberty of the sons of God, the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth. The very anticipation of thy approach, however distant, gives vigour to our exertions, patience to our sufferings, and stimulus to our hopes; and yet, patient as she is under thy delay, the whole redeemed church raises her longing eye, and, with her ten thousand times ten thousand voices, cries "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly!"

The Author was most particularly attached to Surrey Chapel. Three of his printed sermons were delivered there, he for many years preached there during a month of every year, (Mr Hill spent half his time at Wootton-under-Edge) and he was invited to be Mr Hill's successor. Next to Carr's Lane Chapel he seems to the Editor more identified with Surrey Chapel than with any other place of worship.

THE AGED MINISTER OF CHRIST CONTEMPLATED.

A SERMON,

PREACHED IN VICTORIA STREET CHAPEL, DERBY,

ON OCCASION OF

CELEBRATING THE JUBILEE OF THE PASTORATE OF THE REV. JAMES GAWTHORN.

The part which I have been requested to take in the interesting services of this day, is in strict and beautiful harmony with the occasion which has brought us together. The venerable Pastor of the Church assembling in this place, having by the good Providence of God, attained to the jubilee of his ministry here, and, by abundant grace from on high, maintained an unspotted reputation, and lived up to this time in the esteem and affection of his flock, they have determined to celebrate the event in a way which shall testify to him and to the public, in the most emphatic manner, their gratitude for his long services, their esteem for his holy character, and their resolution to do all in their power to render the remainder of his days tranquil and happy.

Whatever other services might be judged proper, a sermon is strictly appropriate to the occasion; and, indeed, without this the jubilee of a preacher would seem to want its most characteristic mark, a want which no festivities, however joyful and innocent, could altogether supply. To that "labour of love" I have been invited, as being one of Mr. Gawthorn's oldest friends and nearest neighbours, a work which I shall now proceed with great good will to perform.

The subject which I have selected for our meditation and instruction, is the description which the Apostle of the Gentiles gives of himself in his letter to Philemon.

Epistle to Philemon 9.

Being such an one as Paul the aged.

It is impossible to ascertain, with precision, the age of the apostle when he wrote this exquisitely beautiful and pathetic letter to Philemon. Doddridge supposes he might have been about twenty-three years of age at the time of his conversion. But Chrysostom, who flourished in the fourth century, makes him ten years older at the time of his great change. In the former case, he could not have been much above fifty; and in the latter, which is the more probable of the two, he would be about sixty-three. Even this does not amount to what is usually called "aged;" but Paul was made prematurely old by his labours, cares, and sufferings. The difficulty of settling this point arises from the latitude of meaning which, according to the usage of ancient times, we must give to Luke's expression in the Acts of the Apostles, where Paul is first introduced to us as a "young man" at whose feet the men that stoned Stephen laid down their clothes. This phrase was often extended in its application to those who had arrived nearly at middle life.

In thus describing himself as an aged man, the apostle had a purpose to serve, and in that purpose tacitly refers to a principle, universally admitted by all nations, savage and civilised, ancient and modern, that age has its claims upon our consideration and respect. We all feel it an additional reason why we should grant the wishes of an applicant, that he is old. Paul meekly asserted this claim, and felt it to be but reasonable he should suppose that Philemon would be more willing

to gratify his request concerning Onesimus, because the petitioner in the case was an aged servant of Christ, who had spent the vigour of his life in the service of their common Master.

We now leave the great apostle, and take up the consideration and contemplation of an aged minister. In doing this I shall not enter into any minute description of the duties of his office; nor state separately the claims which he has on this ground upon the respect and affections of his own flock, or the public at large. Nor shall I call you to review the changes, however numerous or great, which have come over society, his congregation, or himself, in passing from the juvenilities of youth to the infirmities of declining years, changes which, so far as they regard the state of society at large during the period of your minister's labours, have been more momentous than have entered into most other jubilees of the world's existence. All these I pass by, to dwell upon subjects more immediately connected with the occasion of our meeting.

In contemplating an aged minister, you are naturally led to review his past history, to estimate his present claims, and to anticipate his future destiny.

I. Review his past history. In doing this, you think of

1. His character; and how during this long period he has conducted himself: what reputation he has spent so many years in building up, and in what estimate he is now held when grey hairs are upon him. If, by God's grace, he has been blameless and harmless, as one of the sons of God without rebuke, if he can appropriate to himself the language of the apostle, "Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily, and justly, and

unblameably, we behaved ourselves among you that believe," it is a matter of ineffable gratitude both for himself and his people. Spotless reputation is a beautiful object to contemplate in all, but most beautiful in him who is appointed to teach by example as well as by precept. Who can help admiring a character on whom the temptations of fifty years have made no breach, left no stain, and imposed no disfigurement? Many that sailed with the venerable man in youth "have made shipwreck of faith and a good conscience:" he has seen them go down by his side: but there he is just about to enter port, with his bark whole, his sails set, his cargo safe. Piety is always valuable, even the bursting buds of youthful excellence, how much more the rich ripe fruits of old age! The youthful recruit hastening to the field with all the ardour of a martial though untried spirit, is, to those who take pleasure in things pertaining to war, an object of interest; how much more the veteran, returning from long-continued conflicts, sustained with unflinching bravery to the last. Consistent character maintained for half a century, is an object for angels as well as men, yea for God himself, to look upon with delight.

2. Think of his labours. Yes, labours. People have a wrong estimate of a minister's life, who judge of it only by the conduct of those who make it a sinecure, while they disregard all its duties and its obligations. Such doubtless there are, men who said, "Put me into the priest's office for a morsel of bread," or who sought it for the indulgence of a literary taste, or for the gratification of a propensity to idleness, or with the hope of marrying a rich wife and living at ease. It is too true that all sections of the church are cursed with some

ministers of this description, who are looking every one for his gain from his quarter: "dumb dogs are they that cannot bark, lying down, loving to slumber." But look at the true, the good, the faithful minister, as described in Scripture. He is a labourer, a watchman, a fisher, a soldier, a builder, a wrestler; all terms that employ toil, vigilance, effort, perseverance, and enduring self-denial. There are men, not a few, whose lives and exertions justify the employment of such figures of speech. They do labour, in the closet by wrestling supplication; in the study by intense application; in the pulpit by earnest preaching; in the church by pastoral oversight; in the houses of their friends by counsel, reproof, and warning; by their pens as well as their tongues; on week-days and on Sabbath-days; at home and abroad. The faithful minister must be classed among those who have no Sabbath. True, his toils are chiefly mental; but who knows not that, on this account, they are the more exhausting and wearing? You may judge then what estimate to form of his services who has continued all this for fifty years; and who, after bearing the heat and burden of the day, is a workman still, and, instead of devoting the evening to repose, is giving that also to the service of his Master and his flock.

3. Dwell upon his usefulness. It may seem to some a great mercy to pass through life without doing moral harm; to maintain the ground of neutrality between good and evil, and to attain to the point of negation. And when we consider how many there are who, by the poison of their principles and the corruption of their example, inflict positive mischief upon society, it is a ground for thankfulness not to have cursed society by infidelity or vice. But to aim to do no harm, is a poor,

low, creeping ambition: our duty is to do good; and in one sense, not to do good is to do harm. It is every man's solemn obligation to benefit society, and every man has some means and some opportunities for such beneficence. The consistent Christian is a blessing not only to his Church, but to his country, and to his species. I can never look upon an aged disciple of Christ, who has maintained a holy blameless and consistent reputation, and who has added liberality to personal sanctity, without reverent regard. How many have been impressed by his example, enriched by his beneficence, blessed by his prayers, and instructed by his principles. If this be true of the disciple, how much more of the good minister of Jesus Christ. There is his example also: not that this is more perfect than the other, but it is more public: not that it shines with a brighter lustre, but it is lifted higher, and is more seen. He is a city on the hill, while the other is in a valley. Then there are his prayers. Here, too, he may not seem to be above his fellow Christians, for they also pray. Yes; but it may be supposed his prayers take in a wider scope, are more in the form of intercession, especially for the people of his charge. Then many of them are presented in the hearing of his people. He leads them into the presence of God, and is their intercessor with him, as well as their spokesman. His prayers, if they are what public prayers ought to be, kindle the spark of devotion in their hearts, fan it to a flame, and keep the fire burning. A devout minister does almost as much good in the way of promoting religious affections, by his public prayers, as by his sermons: and this matter is deserving of far more consideration by the ministry than it receives. Next comes his preaching.

By this what instruction is communicated, what impression is produced, and what results follow. Infidels are convinced, profligates reclaimed, souls converted, believers comforted, sanctified, and preserved. Into how many dark minds has he been the means of introducing "the marvellous light" of the "glorious Gospel" of Christ: into how many families has he conveyed piety, order, love, and peace. How greatly has he promoted the wellbeing of the community by scattering abroad the principles of liberty and loyalty; by supporting the authority of government and the restraints of law; by reproving vices which no legal enactments can reach, and fostering virtues, which no human power can compel. How has he sustained by his general conduct and pulpit labours both in his own congregation, in his denomination, and the catholic church at large, those institutions which are intended more perfectly to evangelise his own country and to convert the world to Christ. And in many cases, to all this may be added the publication of works which will live when he is dead, and by which he being dead, will yet continue to speak and act. What mind but that which is infinite can grasp the sum total of usefulness sought in this way which has been crowded into a successful ministry of fifty years?

4. Next you will think of his trials. There is no exemption for the most holy servant of God, from the ordinary lot of humanity. He is called to sympathise with the afflicted; and as experience is the foundation of sympathy he must drink the bitter cup of sorrow himself: even Christ, "though a Son, learned obedience by the things that he suffered." "In all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren that he

might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted." So it is with us: "Whether we be afflicted it is for your consolation and salvation, which is effectual in the enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer: or whether we be comforted it is for your consolation and salvation." Having learnt the reason of a minister's trials, look next at their nature. There are his trials as a man. The pulpit is not too lofty for the clouds which are exhaled and roll up from the earth to reach. The companion of his pilgrimage is taken from his side, his comforter and counsellor is removed: his children die, or are scattered over the earth; his property, if he has any, is subject to the vicissitudes of all that is seen and temporal. Add to these his trials as a Christian. All that you know and suffer in the great conflict he knows, and perhaps with greater weight and force. But especially dwell on his trials as a minister. Sometimes he is half broken in heart by a want of success. He has so often cried, "Who hath believed our report and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed!" that he is almost ready to say "I will speak no more in his name." Some over whom he rejoiced as his success and reward, as his joy and hope, and whom he expected would be his crown and rejoicing in the day of Christ, turn back and walk the ways of God no more; others, offended by his fidelity, desert him; others grieve him by their worldliness and inconsistency; others whom he counted upon to stand with him to the end of his ministry, infected by the love of novelty abandon him for some new favourite; others,

though professedly his own children in the faith, sting him with unkindness and neglect; others thwart him in his schemes of usefulness by direct opposition or standing by without lending a helping hand. But where shall we end? Ah, you know a minister's joys far better than you know his sorrows. You see his sails, but not his ballast. You follow him in his public walks of labour, but not in his Gethsemane retreat, where he goes to pray and agonise alone. He calls you to share his felicities, but he carries his perplexities and his griefs to his closet and his God. Look then at the hoary man over whom the clouds of fifty years have rolled. How many storms have burst upon that aged tree, tearing off its branches, stripping off its leaves, and dismantling it in some cases, till little else but the mere trunk and a few boughs remain of all that once umbrageous top. Still, however, the venerable trunk does remain, and there is life in it to the last. How much of divine power and faithfulness and grace we associate with that sacred antique.

5. Can you forget his temptations? I now use this word in its popular sense as meaning incentives to sin. Of these what a variety has been comprised in fifty years. A minister may well be supposed to be the chief mark for Satan's arrows. He is. And perhaps the holiest man that ever entered a pulpit would scarcely like that any one but God should know what assaults have been made upon him. He would be ashamed that others should know out of what petty things his great enemy could construct a means of attack. And even he does not know all the precipices on the verge of which he has been treading in the dark. The faults of ministers so powerfully affect the cause of Christianity that

it is no wonder the power and policy of hell should be all employed to effect such scandals. And alas! alas! with what success have these stratagems of the Wicked One been employed of late; and the wonder is that what he cannot accomplish by his own direct attacks, he does not more frequently achieve by the calumnies of others. There seems to be some truth in the quaint remarks of an old author, that a special Providence watches over the lives of little children and the characters of good men. Are instances of ministerial delinquency so rare, as to make it matter of no thankfulness when we see a man who through God's grace has come scatheless from the temptations of fifty years? Would to God they were. But how many have we heard of, if not witnessed, in our day? "Some of whom have been forced to enter into secular life. Some have crossed the sea and commenced the pastor, where the sinner was unknown. Some, after a spiritual quarantine, have been admitted again by their former connections as wholesome and safe. Some have established a new schismatical interest, and drawing after them a desperate faction, who pretend to be satisfied with their own avowals of innocency, or repentance, have become more popular than before. In general they have become advocates for a higher strain of doctrine that will not reproach the laxity of their morals; and making up in pride what they want in purity, profess to see things clearly, and decry all others as blind. Licentiousness is the liberty wherewith Christ has made them free."

Let us then, this day, refresh ourselves, by looking at one, (and thank God we have seen others of a like kind,) who has stood for half a century exposed to the fiery darts of the wicked, and by the shield of faith has

quenched them all, and who appears among us as a proof, for the encouragement of his younger brethren, of what God can do in the way of carrying his servants through the temptations that are common to man.

II. We now, in contemplating the aged minister, estimate his present claims.

1. He is entitled, if a holy and faithful man, and in proportion to his sanctity and fidelity, to respect and veneration. Antiquity seems in most cases to call forth feelings of reverence. An aged tree, an old castle, an antique book, or an article of any kind of ancient date is regarded with emotions of this kind. But this very forcibly applies to an aged man, an aged Christian, but most of all to an aged minister. Not, however, that in application to the latter case, age, apart from moral excellence, is entitled to respect; quite the contrary, for it then becomes an object of detestation and loathing. To see the sanction of hoary hairs given to iniquity is indeed disgraceful and revolting. A wicked old man is the most shocking spectacle upon earth, with the exception of a wicked old minister. On the other hand, "the hoary head is a crown of glory when found in the way of righteousness." If in youthful piety there be the beauty that charms, in aged godliness there is the venerableness that awes. The old and faithful servant in a family, a farm, or a factory, who has worn out the vigour of fifty years in promoting the interests of his employer is an object, as he moves slowly along, for any one to stop and look at with respect, and to pay to him the tribute which his hoary virtue deserves and demands. What, then, should be the veneration paid to the aged servant of Christ and his church, by those who have had

so long a time the benefit of his services, and have seen him grow old in their employ. As he moves amongst his people, not only might the children pluck his gown to share his smile, but their fathers should look up to him as to one who has a claim upon their reverential regard.

2. Has he not claims also upon their affection? It might seem almost an infraction of the law of modesty for one of the ministry, and one who is himself approaching the rank, if not already in it, of an aged minister, thus to put forth demands for his brethren, which some will consider as demands for himself. Well, if the claims be just and be presented in meekness, there is, perhaps, nothing wrong in this. Hear then what the apostle says, "We beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and to esteem them very highly in love for their works' sake." Now as the claim is founded upon labour, if there be no work done, there is no affection due or demanded. It is affecting to consider that the man who wrote this had to say on another occasion and to another church, "The more I love you the less I am loved." One would hope for the honour of human nature that this is a rare case: and indeed even in Paul's case it applied only to a part of the church. The love to a minister does not rest simply on personal grounds, though both as a man and a Christian he may by his general and sacred excellences possess and present them, but on official and relative ones. It is not claimed for what he is in himself, but what he is to his people as their minister and pastor; their friend and counsellor; in fact the instrument of their salvation, and the promoter of their progressive sanctification. Surely then it is true, that if offices

of such love, tenderness, and value entitle him to their affection, the claims must increase with years. It would be strange indeed if the studies and experience of so many years did not qualify him still more effectually to discharge his duties towards them. He is therefore far more entitled to their affection in old age than in youth. Yet it is painful and melancholy for some men to contrast, as they have to do, the affection shewn them in youth, and that which is exhibited when wrinkles are on their cheek, and grey hairs upon their brow. With what mournful accents has many an one had to say, "Where is then the blindness ye spake of? For I bear you record, that, if it had been possible ye would have plucked out your own eyes and have given them to me." In his early ministry every wish was not only gratified, but anticipated. Every eye sparkled with pleasure, every countenance beamed with a smile, and every tongue was voluble with the language of welcome praise and compliment. All vied with each other who should be most obsequious in their attention to his comfort, for the increase of which every door was open and every table was spread. Ah! this was in the gladness of his espousals with the church. But he has grown aged among them, and, poor old man, he has to see all this repeated, not however to himself, but to some young brother lately introduced to another church in the same town, while he has to say with a sigh, "So was it with me once, but I am old." So have we seen the bridegroom in the days of his nuptials, lavishing on his bride the ardour, the vigilance, the delicacy, and inventions of his love, as if he could not do enough to make her sensible of the sincerity and strength of his affection. Time rolled on, and "first love" at length cooled into

decent moderation, then into lukewarmness, then into indifference, then into neglect, and then, in some cases, into alienation. It is a lovely spectacle to see the youthful pair in their unobtrusive, unostentatious intercourse with each other; but how much more so to see the aged couple when thirty or forty or fifty years, with all their trying circumstances, have rolled over their union as sincerely, respectfully, and affectionately attached to each other as when they led each other from the nuptial ceremony to their home. It is a beautiful scene to witness a church gathering with delighted love round a young pastor on his entrance among them, but it is a still more beautiful object to see a church gathering with respect and affection round an aged one.

3. If an aged minister has a claim for affection, he must also have a right to expect gratitude. Every young pastor who might have gone to other churches, had he chosen to do so, has, upon accepting the invitation of a congregation, some demand upon their thankfulness. He has terminated their solicitude, he has supplied a chasm in their church history, he has united them more closely to each other by uniting them to himself. So far he has already benefited them. But of course his claims go no further. He has made them promises, but he has yet had no time to fulfil them; and has opened prospects before them which he has not yet been able to realize. How different the case of an aged minister. He has perhaps more than fulfilled his promises, and more than realized his prospects. He has been to them as a church collectively, (and for how long a period,) the centre of their union, the medium of their communion. He has presided over them in "the meekness of wisdom." He has, by God's blessing, been the promoter of their

peace, and the means of their prosperity. What sweet fellowship and undisturbed communion have they enjoyed during the long term of his pastorate, while other churches have by the removal or imprudence of their pastors been involved in disputes, difficulties, and contentions. As individuals, they are no less indebted to him. To many of them he has been the instrument of their conversion; to others of their sanctification, consolation, and edification, through many, many years. In the sanctuary he has refreshed, quickened, and warned them by his sermons; and in their houses by his visits. Through his wise and faithful counsels and reproofs they may have been preserved from ruin for both worlds. He was first the guide of their youth, then the counsellor and help of their manhood, and is now their prop when, like himself, they are old. Let any one estimate, if he can, the amount of instruction, consolation, and religious benefit of every kind, which must have flowed into a Christian church of any magnitude during a ministry of forty or fifty years. What multitudes during that period have received the richest blessings which man can accept or God impart. Here before you is the man who has exhausted the vigour of his youth, the strength of his manhood, and now is adding to it all that remains of life, for his church, and let that church estimate, if it can, the amount of its obligation to its pastor in his seventy-fifth year, who of those years has given fifty to them, and now pledges to them all that remain, whether the remainder is to be spent in suffering or in service.

4. I next mention candour and forbearance as virtues which an aged minister is entitled to expect; and of which, in some cases, by the gathering infirmities

of declining years, he will stand in need. There is, there must be, as regards capacity for labour, a manifest difference between senility and youthful vigour. Should the powers of the mind show no signs of decay, but remain to threescore years and ten not perceptibly impaired, (and yet how rarely is this the case,) still the frail tenement of the indwelling spirit must sink into irreparable dilapidation. The exquisitely beautiful allegory of Solomon must be realised, and the days come on when the aged man shall say, "I have no pleasure in them, the day when the keepers of the house shall tremble, and the strong men shall bow themselves, and the grinders cease because they are few, and those that look out of the window be darkened; and the doors shall be shut in the streets when the sound of the grinding is low; and he shall rise up at the voice of the bird, and all the daughters of music shall be brought low; and when they shall be afraid of that which is high, and fears shall be in the way; and the almond tree shall flourish, and the grasshopper shall be a burden, and desire shall fail." Yes, all this must be realized in the minister as well as in the member. Exertion cannot be so long continued in age, fatigue cannot be so easily endured, difficulties cannot be so resolutely met and mastered as once they were. To expect the same bodily effort in an aged pastor as in younger years he with facility rendered to his church, is unreasonable. Demands upon his labour, time, and attention must be lowered, and expectations must be lessened in a ratio proportioned to the increase of his years. And then, in many cases, the mind partakes of the decay of the body. The quickness of the memory is diminished, and like other men he forgets first names and then faces: the

richness of his fancy is lowered, and the former power of his intellect is weakened. He is not what he was: he knows it, feels it, laments it. Often, could you break in upon his solitude, you would find him in tears to feel that he cannot go forth as aforetime: doubting whether it is not his duty to resign his pulpit and his charge into other, younger and abler hands. To criticise such a man's labours with a remorseless severity; to compare him cruelly with some younger men, or with his former self; to expect from three score and ten years what is, and what was, rendered by thirty; and then to be petulant, impatient, objurgatory if all be not rendered which is thus unjustly demanded, who shall characterise such conduct, and in what terms of reproof, not to say of indignation, shall it be condemned? This aged man would be all he ever was if he could, but he cannot. Is it too much to look for patience, candour, and forbearance under such circumstances? Shall it be one of the bitterest blasts to his soul in the cold evening of his life's winter, to find that he has not only outlived his former self, but the patience of his friends? On the contrary, his flock should make him feel that his very ruins that remain are precious in their eyes: and that they accept as a compensation for the vivacity of youth, the experience of age.

5. And has he not a claim upon your attendance upon his ministry? To desert him when he is old, is a poor reward for the more effective services of younger and stronger days. For such a man to find himself forsaken, and forsaken too by his own friends and spiritual offspring, for some new and young preacher, lately come to town; or for his own coadjutor, associated with him in the pastorate, is at once unfeeling and ungrateful. I

knew a venerable and most excellent minister who had a young and popular assistant, and whose feelings were often wounded and his peace disturbed by seeing the members of the congregation looking through a window in the porch, which he commanded from the pulpit, to see who was to be the preacher, and then turn upon their heel and depart, upon ascertaining that it was he who was to officiate. Old men have their feelings: their sensibilities are not so blunted by nature, or extraordinarily sanctified by grace, as to have no susceptibility to the influence of such treatment: they can, they do, feel neglect, and feel it keenly too. Perhaps they are not always prepared to admit their own decay. "Strangers have devoured their strength; grey hairs are here and there upon them, yet they know it not." Nor are they always so considerate as they should be of the fickleness and love of novelty that is inherent in human nature. There are some hearers whom no degree of talent would reconcile to hear the same man for any length of time. They have a morbid appetite which is ever craving after novelty, and which, not satisfied with plain, nutritious food, must have all sorts of confectionery and spicy dishes, and then querulously complain if their palate be not thus consulted and gratified. Such persons endeavour to justify themselves by blaming the preacher. They are not capricious, but he is so old, so dull, so prosing, that they cannot any longer profit by his ministry: he brings them nothing new, nothing intellectual, philosophical or eloquent, and they really can no longer endure it. Thus they wander about from place to place after every new comer, and at last acquire a fastidiousness which nothing can satisfy, and a vagrancy which nothing can fix. There are others not so far gone in

this Athenian passion of loving to hear some new thing, who still are strongly disposed to change what is old for what is new, and to forsake an aged for a younger minister. They have grown weary of the voice they have heard for so many years, and tired of seeing the same form rising so long in the same pulpit. Well if age be a fault, and it is the only one they profess to find in him, it is one for which he has no cause to blame himself, and which must of necessity still grow upon him, and which he cannot hope to mend, but by his spirit's throwing off her mortal coil to "flourish in the regions of immortal youth." This will be too late to be of service to his people; but O, to himself, what a transformation! *

Still I am aware, and will acknowledge, that there are limits to the forbearance of our churches, even if there are none to the unreasonable expectations and demands of some of their pastors. A church ought not to be suffered to sink under the infirmities, the incapacity, and the obstinacy of an aged minister. It is in some cases very obvious that decay has destroyed the sensibility which would otherwise have perceived and prevented the mischief; and that the aged preacher is scarcely conscious of his own infirmities, and is at

* This section of the sermon is peculiarly affecting to the Editor, as, though it does not, through God's mercy, describe his father's case, it is a transcript of the apprehensions which sometimes haunted him. As is always the case with an old minister, young people will follow younger preachers, and the usual secessions of the wonted characters to the Establishment must take place. These matters the Author felt the more the older he grew until he had a colleague, and then he was relieved from all such anxieties. That such was the case with him may perhaps afford a little comfort to some of his brethren.

a loss to account for the gradual declension of his congregation. In such a case, the congregation are in a painful dilemma; they have either to see the cause suffer, or to inflict a wound upon the peace of an aged and deserving pastor. The difficulty is less where the congregation is strong enough to support two ministers, there an assistant, if not co-pastor, can be obtained, and ought to be obtained: and the subject can, and should be suggested to the aged minister, who if he is a wise man will readily consent to the wishes of the people, and be glad to have his own deficiencies thus supplied. But what is to be done where the minister is entirely dependent upon his stipend for support, and the people are too few, and too poor, to sustain an assistant?* I hardly know what to say, and yet ought I to hesitate, however unkind it may seem, to say, that rather than the church should be destroyed, the pastor, who can no longer keep it up, should certainly resign, and cast him-

* Nothing is more needed among the Congregational Churches than a fund for the support of aged and infirm ministers. I know there are several Institutions to help them to eke out a salary while they continue in their duties, and which distribute a portion of their funds to them after they have ceased to preach: but this does not meet the case. What we want is a fund which should furnish an annuity of not less than forty or fifty pounds a year to such as have attained a certain age and are incapable of labour. I know there are several local institutions that yield this also in part, and I believe that their managers are inviting the ministry thus to take care of themselves in old age. But still something more general, comprehending the whole body, should be provided, if not by a new institution by a consolidation of such as already exist, and every minister should be pressed to join it. Perhaps there are few men less provident against the time of sickness and old age than ministers. True their stipends are usually so small that they can scarcely take care of the present, and must therefore leave the future to take care of

self upon God for support: and if he has been a holy and a faithful man, I do not believe God will forsake him. Through God's bountiful Providence, I am not in a situation to make my own views, feelings and determination a standard for others, less blessed in this respect than myself, but my church need be under no apprehension that their pastor will stay to their injury, when he through the infirmities of age shall be no longer able so effectually to discharge his duties as to keep up the congregation. His danger will be, if he do not mistake himself, in an opposite direction, and he will be too quick instead of being too slow, to discern signs of declension, and portents which say to him "arise and depart." His friends will be spared the self denying task of even intimating, in the most distant manner, that it is time for him and them to think of a change. They will have no difficulty in getting rid of him, when it is their wish to do so. Under the Jewish law a priest was

itself. What a bounty would some rich man bestow upon us, if he would bequeath his fortune to found a general society for the support of aged ministers. [The Author himself eventually accomplished the foundation of such an institution. By giving, as a nucleus round which a fund might be gathered, the sum placed at his disposal at his Jubilee, and by appeals to the public in periodicals, he prepared the way for the Congregational Union taking up the project. And they have so matured the plan, and gained for it such extensive support, that, while this sheet is going through the press, the Editor is engaged in the preparation of a deed to found and organise the Institution. The Author's object was to benefit the churches rather than the ministers, by relieving them from pastors who had, by age or illness, become inefficient; and he saw that to confine the aid of the Institution to right cases would tax all the principle and firmness of its managers. But if a sufficient fund is raised, and the income of it wisely applied, it will be the greatest boon ever conferred upon the denomination.]

dismissed from his sacerdotal functions at the age of fifty. This provided for their being vigorously discharged. This however is not law for us. Still to see a man clinging with tenacity to office when incompetent to discharge its duties and when others think he should resign it, seems to savour somewhat of pride as if no one could be found to supply his place. Some men have so strange a notion of ministerial obligations, and so equally strange a notion about resigning the pastoral office, that they seem to imagine it a kind of desertion to give up their ministry when all but absolutely incapable of discharging its duties. I think I have seen some instances in which men have retired too soon, "while their eye was not dim, nor their natural force abated." Whenever such a step is taken, and a minister retires from public life to otium, he should take especial care that it should be cum dignitate. His exit should be graceful, and his farewell tender, so that he may be followed into his retreat with the respect and affection of those whom he left on the field of action.*

III. Let us now anticipate the future destiny of the aged minister. There needs no gift of prophecy to foretell that the young must grow old, if they are permitted to live long enough, and the old, older; that the strong must become weak, and the weak dissolve and die. "The days of our years are threescore years and ten, and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet

* The Author did not fail to practise what he here lays down. During his last years he had a peculiar dread of surviving his efficiency without being himself conscious of his decay; and for this, among other reasons, he, at a time, which some thought almost premature, let it be understood that the responsibility of the pastorate had devolved upon his colleague.

is their strength labour and sorrow, for it is soon cut off and we fly away." The sun that rises in such splendour and waxes brighter and brighter unto the perfect day, must decline and set. Growth, decline, and death are the law of all life on earth, from which there is no exemption on behalf of the minister of the gospel. He preaches on the high theme of immortality, but it is with the breath in his nostrils, ready to depart. It has been known that a hearer has furtively put back the hands of the clock, that by a kind of pious fraud the pastor might be entrapped into a longer sermon, but no device can put back the hand upon the dial of his life, to protract his existence. We listen to a juvenile and to an aged minister, with all the difference of feeling with which we watch the evolution of the verdant leaf in the spring, and notice its sere and yellow state in autumn.

In some cases God is pleased to grant such a degree of physical strength and to protract it so long, that if it were not for the wrinkles on the face, and the grey hairs upon the brow, the hearers of the preacher would scarcely believe that he who speaks with a voice so strong, and with a mind so clear, can be verging on old age; and they are surprised to hear him call himself an aged man. But even in that case, the principle of decay is secretly at work, and the worm, though it has not eaten through the shell, is preying upon the kernel. In due time comes disease, which in some cases is very gradual, and all but imperceptible, so as to awaken no alarm, to excite no anxiety, and seemingly to require no precaution. But that which thus at first so insidiously approached at length develops itself and exhibits unmistakeable symptoms of advancing and irresistible

incurable disease. Ah this is now the time to try the patience of the minister and the kind forbearance of the congregation. His labours are feeble and intermittent. Much trouble, perplexity, and expense are incurred, in keeping the pulpit well supplied. The looser and lighter hearers drop off. The congregation is diminished. The good man, on his occasional return to the pulpit perceives it, and is grieved. He is at a loss what to do; unwilling to resign while there is a hope of recovery, and yet very uncertain whether he shall recover, he experiences much mental conflict, which aggravates his disease, and gives him sleepless nights and anxious days. Oh ye deacons, now is the time for you to be at your post, to be active for the church, and to sympathise with the aged and afflicted pastor. Oh ye church members, now is the time for you to be constantly in your place, that you might comfort his heart by the assurance that the church will not suffer by his absence. For it is the church, the welfare of his beloved church, which, in this solemn painful season, presses upon his heart. His pains would be lighter could he be assured of the welfare of that. Disease advances, and through a lengthened period of decline, the now disabled pastor has an opportunity to exhibit the passive virtues of that religion which he inculcated through his lengthened ministry. His bed is now his pulpit, from which he preaches; on faith, by exercising it; on patience, by exemplifying it; on submission, by practising it. To the doctrines which formed the high theme of his ministry he sets the seal of his dying testimony. He looks back with the profoundest humiliation upon his imperfections, and gives utterance to his penitence in the hearing of his friends; but still he catches the spirit,

and echoes the language, of the great apostle, "I know whom I have believed and am persuaded He is able to keep that which I have committed to Him until that day. I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight. I have finished my course. I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day, and not to me only but to all them also that love his appearing." Thus the clouds of affliction which gather round his setting sun themselves receive its lustre, and reflect it in various hues of splendour and beauty.

At length comes the end, when he finishes his course with joy, and lays down the ministry which he received of the Lord. The weary, worn-out labourer goes to his rest, and to his reward; goes to be associated with those who were his hope and joy on earth, and now are to be his crown of rejoicing in the presence of Christ; goes to meet his Maker, and hear him say, "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of the Lord." Such words! From such lips! On such an occasion! Are they not a reward ample and abundant, for the labours, the sufferings, of threescore years and ten or fourscore years, and if called to it for martyrdom itself.

So must terminate, however protracted, the connection between the pastor and his flock. "Death worketh in us, but life in you." The very labour we carry on consumes us. This event must be anticipated in all, but especially in the aged minister. The young may, the old must, die. True it is, that sometimes we see a young and flaming seraph, like Samuel Pearce, Spencer, Henry

Martin, and M'Cheyne called away from this world to that other one, to which they seemed more to belong than to ours. But these are the exceptions; the order usually observed is for the aged to go, and for the young to remain.

Such a consideration of the future history and approaching destiny of the aged minister ought to have some practical bearing upon the feelings and conduct of his people. It should not end in a cold admission of its truth, or in musing upon its solemnity or sadness with mere sentimental pensiveness. Should there not be devout and fervent gratitude for the long possession of the blessing? Does a jubilee of holy example, of ministerial labour, of pastoral oversight, prefer no demand, or only a small one, upon your thankfulness, both to God and man? Ought there not to be a deep sense of responsibility? For having enjoyed for so long a period such advantages, what an account you will have to give! Think of all the sermons you have heard, and the counsels you have received; do you not tremble at the idea of hearing him say, amidst the solemnities of judgment, "I take you to record this day, I am pure from the blood of all men, for I have not shunned to declare unto you the whole counsel of God." How is it with you? What has his ministry been to you? An occasion of life unto life, or of death unto death? Pause, ponder, and examine. And ought there to be no serious reflection? Should there be no such thoughts as these on your mind? "Our minister is no longer even middle aged, but has arrived at the period of life, when, whatever vigour of constitution he may possess, we cannot hope to retain him long. He has himself warned us of this, and we ought therefore to be anxious to improve by his labours

while we enjoy them. And in order that we may retain him longer, we should do all we can to promote his comfort, and keep his mind easy. We should not grieve his spirit by neglecting his ministrations, nor lead him to suppose we have grown weary of the voice we have heard for so many years. We must endeavour to make his last days his best; best for himself and best for us; and to seek that the evening of his day may be calm and bright, and that his sun may go down without any cloud raised from our conduct towards him."

And now my beloved, respected, and venerable friend, the centre at this moment of our attentions and our sensibilities, accept my congratulations on the arrival of this day, and upon all the auspicious circumstances with which it comes attended. Everything calls forth our gratitude and yours. That you have been preserved in holiness and honour to this advanced period of your life; (for what is lengthened life, without these, but a protracted disgrace and curse?) that you have lived in love, harmony, and peace, for so long a period with this church, and retained your place in their hearts till now; that you have secured and held fast the esteem of your fellow-townsmen, the regard of your ministerial brethren, and the confidence of our whole denomination; all of whom gather around you, at least by representation, to-day, to do you honour; all this I say, far more even than the munificent donation which is this evening to embody and express all these sentiments, are matter of sincere and hearty congratulation. But this is not all: to you it must be a matter of thankfulness and satisfaction to look back upon the thirteen years which you have spent in the joint pastorate with that most estimable man whom God so wisely and so kindly sent

to labour with you in the ministry; to consider that he is still working with you the work of the Lord, loved by the church as much as he is loved by you, and reciprocating in full measure this love to both; and also to anticipate the moment when it will soften the pillow of death to reflect that in giving up the ministry you are resigning it into the hands of one so competent faithfully to discharge its duties, and to feed the flock. Happy, happy man to be thus blessed. How would it brighten the evening of my own days and relieve my heart of an oppressive load of anxiety if I were blessed in this respect as you are.*

And now may God preserve you yet longer to us, rich in years, and in experience, till at length full of days and of honours, having fully served your generation according to the will of God, you shall fall asleep in Jesus.

* The Author had not the happiness of having the co-pastor with whom Providence after blessed him. Ed.

THE CHARACTER AND TRANSLATION OF ENOCH.

A SERMON,

DELIVERED IN THE INDEPENDENT CHAPEL,
SWAN HILL, SHREWSBURY,
ON TUESDAY EVENING, FEBRUARY 24, 1852
ON THE OCCASION OF THE SUDDEN
DEATH OF THE REV. THOMAS WEAVER.

The circumstances of Mr Weaver's death should be mentioned in explanation of the sermon. On the day on which it occurred, he appeared in his usual health. Having attended a meeting, to make arrangements for the first public service of the Evangelical Alliance in Shrewsbury, at which he had shown great cheerfulness and animation, he went on the same business to the house of the Vicar of St. Alkmond's. He was there shown into a room alone, and Mr Wightman, after a little time, returning home and going to him, found him lying perfectly dead beside the chair on which he had been sitting.

It will not, we believe, be denied that Mr Weaver was, at the time of his death, from his sterling virtues, and the unbending consistency of his long and blameless life, of all ministers of religion in Shropshire, the one most esteemed and venerated by all parties. And this testimony to the worth of a Nonconformist those who know the county best will best appreciate.

The Editor, who was for four years a member of Mr Weaver's congregation, remembers his telling him that his grandfather was a German, who brought into England the art of making marbled paper as now practised; and there was a little of the foreigner in Mr Weaver's appearance and character.

I NEED not inform the large and deeply affected audience now before me, what event has brought me into this pulpit on the present occasion. Mr. Weaver, the respected inhabitant of this town, the holy minister of religion, and the beloved pastor of this church for more than half a century, is no more. Three years ago I was here to celebrate his jubilee: I am now here to commemorate his death. That was a season of unmixed joy; this of general lamentation. We then rejoiced with him in his joy, but he does not now weep with us who weep. His tears ceased for ever to flow when those of his friends, on his account, commenced. He is gone, but is he forgotten? No; nor ever will be as long as any one that knew and loved him (and who that knew him did not love him?) shall remain. When I consented to preach his funeral discourse, a passage of Holy Scripture occurred to my recollection, which, by general opinion, will be considered even more descriptive of his character than it is of his removal.

GENESIS V, 24.

And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him.

The name of Enoch appears upon the firmament of Scripture as a star of the first magnitude, the rays of which, the brighter for their contrast with the sur-

rounding darkness, have guided many, we believe, to that blessed world to which he himself was so mysteriously taken. His history is a short and beautiful episode in the midst of a dry list of antediluvian names, and of a mournful record of the ravages of mortality. We know little more of him than that, in an age of general and abounding depravity, he was an eminent example of earnest and consistent piety. The apostle Jude informs us that he was not only a believer in God, but an inspired prophet. This was probably the case with all the patriarchs in the line of Seth, commemorated in this chapter. There was then no written revelation, and the knowledge granted originally to Adam, and subsequently to others, was continued, before the flood, by tradition. To preserve this uncorrupted, was perhaps the design of the extreme longevity recorded of the antediluvians, a distinction possibly conferred only on those illustrious men, and not upon the inhabitants of the world in general. The apostle Jude, speaking of Enoch, says of him, "He was the seventh from Adam, and prophesied of them, saying, Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him." It has been a subject of Biblical criticism whence this quotation of Jude, as well as the other relating to Satan's contest with Michael the archangel, concerning the body of Moses, were derived, whether from an apocryphal document called "The Book of Enoch;" from the traditions of the Jews; or from a direct revelation from God. It could not be the first, for the

apostle would not thus give his authority to a spurious and pretended book of scripture. Nor is it necessary to suppose the latter. It was, no doubt, derived from a traditional account preserved among the Jews. This, however, gives no sanction to the doctrine of tradition as held by the Papists, which, they say, consists of an oral law given by Christ to his apostles, in addition to the Scriptures, and by them deposited in the keeping of the church. The tradition in question was quoted by Jude, an inspired writer, and thus made a part of scripture itself. How different is the case with those traditions which we are required to believe on the sole and unsustained authority of the church. There is a detail in this quotation which is worthy of a passing remark. The very number of Enoch's generation is mentioned, and he is called "the seventh from Adam." There seems to be no importance in this particular, except to distinguish him from another of the same name who was a descendant of Cain, with whom, however, it was not likely he would be confounded. But it seems to shew us the honour God puts upon his servants, and the importance he attaches to his cause, when though nearly the whole of Cain's posterity were passed over in neglectful silence, and though the kings and empires of the old world were consigned to eternal oblivion as not worthy of notice, this little circumstance connected with Enoch's pedigree should obtain a place in the inspired chronicle.

The Bible was not granted for the gratification of our curiosity, but for the salvation of our souls; and while there is infinitely too little to satisfy the one, there is abundantly enough to accomplish the other. How scanty is our knowledge of the antediluvian world: its

whole history, though extending through a period of nearly two thousand years, is shut up within the compass of the first five chapters of Genesis, and yet that small fragment of the Bible contains more important information on many momentous particulars connected with man's physical, moral, geographical, and social history, and God's purposes and plans towards him, than can be collected from all the volumes ever written by the pen of man. Of the inhabitants of the antediluvian world we know very little but the fact of their abominable wickedness, which consisted, perhaps, not of idolatry, but of atheism, and its attendant consequence, unbridled violence towards each other.

Among this abandoned race Enoch lived as a believer in God and a preacher of His righteous law; and while he presented to them an illustration of its purity in his holy life, he predicted the infliction, at the judgment day, of its penalty upon all who transgressed its precepts. But they knew not the day of their visitation, and turned a deaf ear to his warnings; and God, at length, removed the blessing which they had so little valued, and so little improved. Noah followed, who was a preacher of righteousness, and by his ark, seemed to hold up to them a type of God's willingness to save all who would repent, believe, and reform, and of the method of their salvation: but all was in vain, and at last, having filled up the measure of their iniquities, and become ripe for destruction, they were swept away by the waters of the deluge.

Having thus glanced at the history of Enoch, let us now contemplate his character and conduct. We find another record of him in the Epistle to the Hebrews, where it is said, "By faith Enoch was translated that

he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him; for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God." It is here distinctly declared that the principle on which his whole character was founded and his conduct directed, was faith. The apostle did not intend to limit the exercise of his faith to his translation, but to inform us what was the one great moving cause of all he did, and what it was that was crowned by this remarkable interposition of God. There are three guides of human conduct, sense, reason, and faith. These are diverse but not opposed. Sense is not opposed to reason, nor sense and reason together, to faith. By sense we act in common with brutes; by sense and reason, as men, in reference to the affairs of this life; and by faith, as christians, in reference to the life to come. Our whole conduct in reference to religion is a course of faith. We see nothing, but believe everything. Neither the God whom we worship, nor the Saviour in whom we trust, nor the heaven to which we are tending, are the objects of vision; we believe in all upon the testimony of God, and our whole character and conduct must be formed under the guidance of this one principle, our belief in the accredited testimony of God: and he who cannot thus live cannot be saved. In an atheistic age Enoch "believed that God is, and that he is the rewarder of all them that diligently seek him:" and he opposed his faith to the infidelity that surrounded him. Such also must be our course. With an immeasurably fuller revelation of the Divine will than he possessed, we ought to have a still stronger and more influential belief of spiritual and eternal realities. It is a difficult, but it is an indispensably necessary thing, to subordinate both sense and reason

to the dominion of faith: it is, in fact, the very nature of true godliness: it is the sublime of human conduct.

We now turn to the description of his character and conduct given by the writer of the Book of Genesis: "He walked with God." Nothing can be more beautiful, comprehensive, or expressive than these few words. They contain a figure of speech: and what a figure! The allusion is to two persons voluntarily and pleasantly walking together, and conversing confidentially with each other. They are friends, for "how can two walk together except they are agreed." They are conscious of each other's presence, as two persons in such a situation necessarily must be. They are engaged in actual intercourse; there is communion and interchange of thought by speech. They are going the same way and engaged upon the same subject. Thus did Enoch walk with God. He was, like Abraham afterwards, the friend of God, having, as a sinner, come into a state of reconciliation with God by repentance and faith in the promised "Seed of the woman." He loved God as the effect of God's love to him, they were friends, and the patriarch knew and rejoiced in it. He lived as in the presence of God: he endured as seeing Him that is invisible, he acted "as ever in the great Taskmaster's eye," and was checked in temptation, stimulated in duty, and comforted in affliction, with Hagar's appeal, "Thou God seest me." His private, domestic, and social life was ever regulated by the assured belief that he was always and everywhere in the presence and under the notice, even to the state of his heart, of an observant God. He maintained habitual communion with God, not only by those public acts of worship and sacrificial rites, which doubtless, he celebrated before the eyes of

the scoffing generation amidst which he lived, not only at the domestic altar around which he gathered his household, nor even in the usual acts of his own private and personal devotion, but also in the constant frame and tenor of his devout and holy mind. His soul was in habitual communion with God, by its thoughts, its aspirations, and its unutterable breathings of confidence, affection, and intense desires. He exercised a divine friendship, a confidential, yet reverential familiarity, and talked with God as a man talketh with his friend. On the other hand, he listened with awe, and veneration, and delight to those communications which God made to him by dream, by vision, or audible revelation. He also sought the same object as God did, he walked the same way, and was one with him, as regarded the chief end of his existence, the glory of Jehovah. To honour him before the ungodly was his object, purpose, and aim. Such was the manner in which Enoch walked with God. Others denied God; he confessed him. They forgot God: he habitually remembered him. They dishonoured him; he delighted to glorify him.

The conduct of this antediluvian saint was the piety of intelligence; he understood God's claim, and his own obligations, and it was not a mere custom. It was the piety of deliberate design and choice: he was not, so to speak, thrown accidentally into God's company, but chose to go to him, and with fixed, determinate purpose, sought His friendship. It was the piety of a great and public man, for he was, probably, a chief, the head of a tribe, at any rate a patriarch, and yet made public duties no excuse for the neglect of personal religion. It was the piety also of a minister of religion:

and what is any minister of religion, without personal godliness, but an actor in the most dreadful tragedy ever performed on the stage of this world, since it ends not in the feigned, but the real, death and destruction of the performer? It was the piety of one who had few of those helps and advantages of divine revelation and religious ordinances which we enjoy, and therefore shows how God can and will help those in the divine life, who are, by Providence, deprived of the assistance which others possess. It was the piety of one who faithful stood amidst the faithless, and who held fast his integrity against the torrent of evil example which continually assailed him, demonstrating not only that God has always some chosen ones in the worst of times, but that He can and will support them in their determination not to follow the multitude who run to do evil. It was piety maintained during a long period of severe trial, a profession consistently upheld amidst all conceivable opposition, for nearly four centuries, thus exhibiting a sublime instance of endurance, perseverance, and victorious faith.

Such was the character of Enoch; how splendid in itself, and how bright a pattern for us! We, too, are called to walk with God. This is the duty to which we also are summoned; the privilege to which we also are invited. This must constitute our religion. What an honour is thus placed within our reach. There is in the very language something every way calculated to astonish us. To walk with God. It seems as if this were a distinction too lofty to be conferred on the highest seraph that lives and worships in the temple above, that it were too great a condescension for the Divine Majesty to confer on Gabriel or Michael, to walk

with him in the gold-paved streets of the New Jerusalem. How much more astonishing is it that this honour should be bestowed on every saint of the Most High on earth, however young, illiterate, or obscure! Where or when do we ever read of an earthly sovereign thus familiarly and habitually walking with the most exalted of his subjects? When the great officers of state, and others, who have the privilege of the entree come into the presence of royalty, they approach obsequiously, conduct themselves with the greatest reverence while there, and having finished their business, retire. Of none of them can it be said they habitually walk with the monarch. Yet thus does the King of kings, in infinite condescension and kindness, conduct himself towards the meanest of his subjects, to whom he grants the privilege of walking with Him. And then what felicity, as well as honour, is implied in this mode of life. Friendship is among the purest, wisest, and most ennobling of all earthly pleasures. What then shall be said of this divine fellowship, this holy and reverent familiarity with Him, before whom angels veil their faces, this friendship with God? Such honour have all the saints, such exceeding great and precious bliss does true religion bring with it.

Let us now contemplate the Translation of Enoch. "He was not; for God took him." Had we nothing but this expression to guide us, we might not probably have been able to determine positively, whether or not the patriarch passed to heaven without dying. Yet the variation in his case from the simple expression, "and he died," applied to the other patriarchs, would, of itself, lead to the supposition that there was something peculiar in his mode of exit from our world. Critics

tell us that the Greek term in the Septuagint version of the Old Testament implies that he was translated. And certain it is that this was the opinion of the Jewish Tangumists in their paraphrase of the passage, and also of Josephus and Philo. And some of the fables of the Greek and Hindoo mythology may probably have been borrowed from it. The apostle Paul, however, settles the question and places it beyond all doubt, where he explicitly says, "he was translated that he should not see death." Enoch then, adds a second instance to that of Elijah, of one of our race who passed to glory, honour, and immortality by another road than that of "the dark valley of the shadow of death." There are many things which, to a reflective mind, will suggest themselves in connection with, and arising out of, this extraordinary event. As "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, and corruption cannot inherit incorruption," the body of the patriarch, and of Elijah, in like manner, must have undergone a sudden and entire transmutation, analogous to that which will pass upon those who shall be alive at the second advent of our Lord, and to which the apostle alludes, where he says, "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump, for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." Indeed, the same change passed upon the humanity of Christ on his ascending to glory. How the human body will be constituted in its celestial state is one of the things to which the expression may be applied, "it doth not yet appear what we shall be:" but this we know that what is sown in corruption shall be

raised in incorruption; what is sown in dishonour, shall be raised in glory; what is sown in weakness, shall be raised in honour; and what is sown a natural body, shall be raised a spiritual body.

A question will arise in most minds, whether the translation of Enoch took place in private or in public. There is one expression used by the apostle Paul, which would almost imply it was a secret exit; it is said "he was not found." This looks as if he had been sought for, which would not have been the case, it is supposed, had it been known he was translated. But the expression might intend nothing more than that he was missed. Such a man could not but be missed. His removal made a chasm which every eye must notice. Missed he must have been by the good who had now lost the benefit of his example, his counsels, and his prayers; and who sensibly felt how much they had been impoverished by the removal of such a man. "Ah," they would mournfully say to each other, "the Patriarch is gone, our father is taken from us, the holy and intrepid preacher is no more with us. We feel his loss on our own account, but still more for the public for whose welfare he so zealously laboured. Help, Lord, for the godly man faileth." Missed he would be by the bad, some of whom would rejoice that they were no more rebuked by his reproaches, wounded by his cutting reproofs, or troubled by his faithful warnings. Yet, some there are, even among the wicked, who feel a kind of sorrowful and respectful grief when a servant of God is removed. "Yes," they say, "we thought him too severe, morose, and stern, too uncompliant and strict, but he did it out of love to our souls, and he was a good

man after all, and his death is a public loss." A faithful minister thus leaves his testimonial and defence, not only in the hearts of holy men, but in the consciences of the unrighteous.

Enoch was missed: should we be missed? How much, and by whom? For what, and how long? Without intentionally aiming at posthumous fame, ought we not all to wish, and seek, so to live, as to be missed and lamented, when we are gone? The generality of men are each like a pebble on the shore, which, if thrown into the sea, is neither missed from the land, nor sensibly a gain to the ocean's bed. Should we be of this character? Who besides our own immediate friends would feel impoverished if we were to be removed to-morrow? What institutions set up for the relief of suffering humanity would be mourners at our obsequies? How much poorer would be our world for our departure from it? Would the sick miss our visits at their bed side? the sorrowful our sympathy in their grief? the poor our alms in their scenes of squalid poverty? the ignorant our instructions in their abodes of darkness? What are we doing, how are we living, to secure over our grave the lamentation, "Alas, my brother, my friend, my benefactor?" And would not some be missed, not indeed as benefactors, but as nuisances? not as blessings but as curses? For how many does the tear of regret fall, not that they are at length dead, but that they had not died sooner. "Oh," says some one, "that he had departed before he had corrupted my son, ruined my daughter, beggared my friends, or led myself astray." Be missed then, and let search be made for you, when you are dead, and be

mourned for with the lamentation attending the death of a friend to humanity and religion, and not the lament that you have lived so long. "When it goeth well with the righteous, the city rejoiceth; and when the wicked perish there is shouting."

The probability, however, with regard to the translation of Enoch is, that it was so far public as to take place before witnesses, how else would it have been known what had become of him? It might have been supposed he had met with an untimely end, or that he had been murdered by some whose hostility he had excited by his fidelity, and whose malignity had goaded on their revenge to a deed of blood. When Elijah was translated, Elisha, and perhaps the sons of the prophets, saw him borne off in his chariot of fire. When Jesus Christ ascended to his glory, he led out his disciples "as far as Bethany, and lifted up his hands and blessed them, and it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and was carried up into heaven." In neither of the two former cases was there entire publicity, but a selection of witnesses, competent, both from qualifications and numbers, to bear credible testimony. It is not unlikely that some of the venerable persons mentioned in this chapter were present on this occasion, to witness and testify the extraordinary event. Adam was dead, and Noah was not yet born, but most of the rest might have been living and present. What an assemblage does such a supposition present to our imagination; and on what an occasion were they brought together! As this event was to answer important religious ends and purposes, we can the more readily suppose the circumstances of it were thus

ordered. We may conclude that all God's dispensations, whether ordinary or extraordinary, which are intended to instruct, to warn, and to rebuke the generation to which they are granted are well adapted to accomplish their contemplated design. This of Enoch's translation was so in an eminent degree. It was designed to bear God's testimony to the excellence and importance of real godliness. Piety was scoffed at, and they who practised it ridiculed and persecuted, by the race of infidels which then everywhere prevailed. The tradition of the murder of righteous Abel by his wicked brother, had come down to them, and uniting its influence with the tyrannical power of the descendants of Cain over the posterity of Seth, who were the professors of true religion, encouraged the atheistic idea in the minds of the multitude, that there either was no God at all, or if there were, that he was an Epicurean deity who had retired from all concern with the affairs of this world, and left all things to be governed by chance. But here was proof beyond all contradiction that "verily there is a God that judgeth in the earth, who discerneth between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not." Here was a testimony of God's approval of the righteous, which was calculated and intended to be a severe rebuke to those who had ridiculed all religion in the person of Enoch, and at the same time an encouragement to them who still held fast their integrity and remained faithful in their profession of religion.

But this was not all the purpose of Enoch's translation, for it furnished and was designed, no doubt, to afford a sensible and striking proof, yea, demonstration of the invisible world. We do not read that miracles

were wrought by the antediluvian patriarchs and prophets; and we know they had no written revelation. It was not unsuitable to such a state of things, nor unlikely that some such event as this should occur, to furnish an evidence both of the immortality of the soul and the resurrection of the body; for Enoch's whole humanity, the body as well as the soul, was taken up to heaven. The portals of the unseen world were thus partially opened, and that atheistic race furnished with a proof of the wondrous truth, that there is a state of existence beyond the grave. That it produced little effect, is too true; but what greater effect was produced by the miracles of Christ and his apostles upon the multitudes of his time, or upon the minds of millions since?

If, however, the removal of Enoch from earth produced but little impression upon its wretched population, his arrival in heaven, we may conceive without any extraordinary or unauthorised stretch of imagination, occasioned new surprise and delight among the angels of God. When the soul of righteous Abel rose from its gory tabernacle to its celestial abode, a new wonder was exhibited to the blessed inhabitants of Paradise. There was the entrance of the first human soul into the heavenly world; the gathering of the first fruits of the mighty harvest that was to follow; the first trophy of redeeming mercy. Upon the arrival of this stranger spirit from the apostate earth we can well imagine that every seraph round the throne of God would burst into new acclamations of praise, and rise into new raptures of delight as the plan of redeeming love thus opened upon their astonished and wondering view. And when Enoch reached that happy world, a still further developement

of this plan took place; for there was our whole humanity, body and soul, represented by him. There was a foreshadowing of the resurrection of the dead, upon beholding which the principalities and powers of the heavenly places would make one step onward in learning "by the church the manifold wisdom of God."

Are any disposed to ask why the saints, instead of being thus translated like Enoch and Elijah, are doomed to travel to immortality by the gloomy and awful pass of death; we reply that this was, no doubt, within the compass of God's power, but not of his wisdom or justice. Reasons abundant are at hand to satisfy the querist. Translation for all the saints, instead of death, would be an entire counteraction of the order of things brought in by sin, and an annulling of the original penalty pronounced upon the human race for the fall. This sentence must pass upon all, with two exceptions, for all have sinned; and thus, as in other cases, the exceptions confirm the rule. Death must remain, even to the righteous, as a comment upon the evil of sin. And how emphatically does it teach this. Every dying groan, every tolling bell, every funeral procession, every opened grave, proclaims the evil of sin, and is a warning against it. So that in one respect, there is mercy as well as justice in this awful arrangement. Translation would require a constant miracle, and a constant miracle would be no miracle at all. It would also deprive Christianity of some of the brightest displays of its power, excellence, and glory. For if ever our holy religion appears in unusual splendour, it is when it enables its professors to subdue the last enemy in his own territories, and to be more than conquerors by faith over the King of Terrors. We had never had

the battles and the victories of the noble army of martyrs, nor the death-bed triumphs of the saints, had they been translated that they should not see death. The unruffled patience, the calm resignation, the joy unspeakable and full of glory of the dying believer, as he gathered up his strength for his last effort, and exclaimed "O death, where is thy sting, O grave, where is thy victory," have extorted from many the response, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my latter end be like his." What multitudes have been converted to God by witnessing, or hearing, the expressions of the dying christian. Translation would change the whole economy of redemption, and instead of walking by faith we should then walk by sight. It would constitute a visible system of discipline and probation. The future and invisible world would, by such an arrangement, be brought within the ken of sense; the decisions of the day of judgment would be anticipated, and the whole course of human affairs be disturbed. No. There must be no other, no brighter, nor more palpable form in which immortality must be brought before us than by an accredited revelation made to our faith instead of our senses. Death must be the terrific gate, the dark passage to life and incorruption; and Christianity must be seen enabling its true believers to pass through this awful scene uttering the song of triumph, "Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

But supposing translation were common, what moral advantage would be gained by it to the children of men? Even its singularity failed to impress the inhabitants of the old world; and would it do more for us if it were an every day occurrence? Men may speculate how

much more they would be influenced by Christianity if its evidences were more common, and its great facts more palpable. It is a delusion, for it is not for want of stronger proof that men are infidels, but for want of disposition candidly to consider and examine that which they have. They who will not believe the testimony of prophets and apostles would not credit that of messengers from the grave and the unseen world. This was declared by our Lord in the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus.

We may, in connection with this part of our discourse, speak with propriety on the subject of sudden death which is suggested by the event that has called us together, and in this case, as well as in every other of a real christian, is as near an approach to a translation as can be made by any one who really dies. To such an one can it be otherwise than a favour to be spared the langours of sickness, the racking pain, the anguish sometimes almost intolerable, and all the other terrible harbingers of dissolution protracted through wearisome nights and months of vanity? To be exempt from the heart-rending pangs of separation at the last faltering adieu: and the solicitude produced by the prospect of leaving some but ill provided for as regards the present world: to be saved from those gloomy apprehensions which sometimes arise in the minds of the strongest and holiest of believers when contemplating the portals of the tomb: to be carried through the iron gates of death before we knew we were drawing near to them: to wake up in a moment, as from a feverish dream, at the sound of the seraphim's song, and exchange in an instant of time the sights of earthly objects for the glorious realities of heaven, and the society of

friends below for the innumerable company of angels and the spirits of just men made perfect; to find ourselves suddenly in the presence of God and the Lamb, and see the smile of welcome upon the countenance of the Saviour, and with a burst of astonishment and gratitude to exclaim,

> "And is this heaven? and am I there?
> How short the road! How swift the flight!"

Oh wonderful, ineffable, inconceivable exchange!

But then, on the other hand, what a shock is the sudden death of a friend to survivors! To have the dear object of affection so abruptly snatched from our embrace, and all the tender ties which bound us together severed in a moment! To have no note of preparation sounded in our ears, nor any premonitory symptoms presented to our sight! To have no time allowed to gather up our strength for the scene of separation! To see no last, longing, lingering look of affection shed back upon us by the retiring saint! To hear no parting words of counsel or consolation, no holy prayer, and to receive no benediction! Is not this sad and sorrowful? Yes, but even this is less painful, after all, than to occupy for days, and weeks, and months, "the dreadful post of observation, darker every hour," and with death hovering in the distance, to see the awful form growing broader and clearer, and approaching continually nearer, and have nothing left but the calculation how long it will be ere the dart of the last enemy will be hurled! Who should say, which, even by survivors, is most to be dreaded or desired? What an unutterable mercy it is we are not left to choose which it shall be, either for ourselves or for our friends. It is in the hands of God:

can it be in better? There let us leave it, being anxious only how we live; and referring it without anxiety to him to determine how we shall die.

There is yet one more particular connected with the antediluvian patriarch, and that is the honour that was put upon him, apart from his translation. "He obtained," said the apostle, "this testimony, that he pleased God." This, no doubt, referred to the record of him in the Old Testament, "that he walked with God." Who can please God that does not walk with Him, or who can fail to please Him that does? Enoch's translation was a testimony to that generation of which he was a member, and to the whole world from that time to this, of God's approval of his conduct. And with what other and still more delightful testimonies all this was followed, when he reached the presence of his Lord, we can scarcely imagine. And such testimony awaits every one who lives as Enoch did, especially every holy and devoted minister of Christ. To him will the great Master say, "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." Thou has served me well, and now I will serve thee well. Thou hast found grace in my sight: and as thou hast shared with me the labour and care of my cause in yonder world, come and be one with me in the joy of this. Oh, to hear such words, from such lips, at such a time! Conceive the warrior of a hundred battles, returning from the field of conflict crowned with the laurels of a hundred victories, to receive his sovereign's personal and public approval, the thanks of the senate, the applause of his country, and the admiration of the world; what an object of congratulation is such a

man! But how dim, and low, and mean is all this, compared with the testimony of God, borne before assembled worlds, to the faithful servant of our Lord Jesus Christ: an honour, the beginning and pledge of which has already lighted on the brow of our departed friend. All the watching, praying, mortification, and self-denial of the christian life, all the anxiety, labour, and trials of the christian minister or missionary, yea, all the sufferings of martyrdom in its most protracted or awful form, are to this but the light afflictions of a moment, compared with the exceeding great and eternal weight of glory. To be told by Jesus from his own lips, and with ineffable affection beaming in his eye, and smiling in his countenance, that we have pleased Him. Oh, who would not live through a life long as Methuselah's and afflicted as Paul's, and find at last in that one testimony an ample reward for all?

This subject is so replete with instruction that the only difficulty is to select such inferences as are most in point.

With such a fact before us is it not impossible to separate the idea of locality from heaven? However difficult it may be for us to associate spirits with space, we cannot avoid doing so with bodies: and those of Enoch, Elijah, and our Lord must be in some place; and so will the bodies of all the saints at the resurrection. Yet it is very clear that it is the design of the Holy Spirit in the records of Scripture, to confine our attention chiefly to the idea of state and condition. We are there told what heaven is, but not where. Curiosity is repressed, but the judgment is informed on all substantial points.

"In vain our fancy strives to paint
The moment after death;
The glories that surround the saint,
When he resigns his breath.

"Thus much, (and this is all,) we know
They are completely blest;
Have done with sin, and care, and woe,
And with their Saviour rest."

And is not this enough to know? More would gratify our curiosity, but would it sanctify the heart? We walk by faith. No matter where we shall be; when we know, what we shall be, perfectly holy and perfectly happy; and with whom we shall be, even with the Lord Jesus to behold His glory. The general and moral aspect of heaven as given in the Bible is its glory. How chaste, dignified, majestic, are the descriptions of our Paradise compared with that of Mohammed, with the Roman elysium, or the fantastic representations of the Hindoos, and other Pagan nations.

Can we help being struck with the abundant evidence of the glorious doctrines of a future state, the immortality of the soul, and the resurrection of the body, with which we are furnished in the Word of God? This is no speculation of man's judgment, no dream of philosophy, no mere vision of excited hope, but the revelation of God. "Jesus Christ hath abolished death and brought life and immortality to light by the gospel." "We know in whom we have believed." "We know that if the earthly house of our tabernacle were dissolved we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." In the translation of Enoch and Elijah, as well as in the resurrection and ascension of Christ, we have, in addition to all God's promises, the evidence of facts. And what facts! How sublime in themselves,

and how chastely and simply told! Let any one read the wild, extravagant, and monstrous stories of the Koran, or the earthly, though tasteful, and often lewd fables of the classic mythology, and compare with them the facts of divine revelation. When such an extraordinary event was to be related as the translation of an eminent saint, it is simply said, "He was not; for God took him." Had this been human invention, how many details of matters strange and wonderful would have been narrated, and what particulars of a marvellous story would have been related. How much of the pomp and parade of circumstance would have been introduced, and what a complicated and decorated web of glory would have been wrought. How different the case before us. This brevity and chaste simplicity are the evidence of authenticity and inspiration.

Who should not desire to belong to that community of which Enoch was a member, and to follow him to that world to which he ascended? The saints before the flood and after, of the Sinai covenant and the Christian, all meet in Christ, and form but one church, under one glorious head. To that belong the illustrious band of the patriarchs, the goodly fellowship of the prophets, the glorious company of the apostles, the noble army of martyrs, and all that ever have lived in the faith and fear of God, and all that ever will. Who that has a spark of holy ambition, a particle of lofty aspiration, a single grand or noble thought, would not wish, and long, and pray, and labour, to be numbered with that holy community? What are men's highest social relations, distinctions, and privileges, compared with this? Let us all choose to cast in our lot with these distinguished and eternally happy people.

Can we help wondering at the condescension of God in granting to his people, even on earth, so vast an honour, as to walk with him in habits of holy friendship? That we should reverence and obey him as servants, is what belongs to our nature, relation and duty; but that we should walk with him as friends, is, on his part, an act of surpassing grace; as it is on ours of no less surpassing honour and felicity. To what elevation has our religion elevated us! The privileges of the believers, by their vastness generate a kind of scepticism. It seems as if it were impossible that such distinction should, or could belong to us.

Nor ought we to omit to suggest to the surviving friends of pious departed relatives, the happiness of those they have lost. They have not gone by the same road as Enoch, but they have arrived at the same home. God has taken them to himself, though he took them not in the same way. And so much more important is the end than the way, that, compared with the idea of reaching heaven at last, it is scarcely worthy a thought, whether they ascended, like Elijah, in a chariot of fire, or travelled along the dark valley of the shadow of death. How would Enoch, had he been permitted to speak to them from the skies, have reproved the excessive grief and immoderate tears of the friends that mourned and wept over his departure: and how, if ours could speak to us from heaven, would they also reprove us in the language of our Lord to his disciples, and say, "If ye loved me, ye would rejoice that I say unto you, I go unto my Father."

Is this our religion? Does this aptly set forth our life? No matter to which church we belong, nor what creed we adopt, nor what ceremonies we profess, nor

what zeal for eternal things connected with religion we manifest, if we are not walking with God. Reconciliation with him through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, an habitual acting as in his sight and with a view to his approbation, and a life of devotional communion with him, is religion, in whomsoever or wheresoever found. Is this ours? Do we intelligently, experimentally, know the meaning of that phrase, walking with God? Let us set it down before us, look at it, ponder it, and never cease to study it, till we know its meaning, and feel its force. None are walking to heaven, but those who are walking with God, all else are walking to perdition. We hear a great deal about other things that are connected with religion, its doctrines, its forms, its professions, but this is itself. If we know nothing of this, we know nothing of true piety. Men may walk with God in any form of church government, and they may also in any one, walk contrary to Him. It is this, and not any external matter, that distinguishes the real from the nominal christian, and it is this which also distinguishes the earnest real christian from the comparatively lukewarm one; the former walks closely with God, presses, so to speak, to his very side; while the other, like Peter, during his season of cowardice, follows afar off. Let us all be admonished by the death of friends to come into closer communion with our Heavenly Father. We all need more, far more, of that divine life which is the beginning of our eternal life. Let us not only sing and sigh out the wish, but act upon it,

"Oh, for a closer walk with God,
A calm and heavenly frame,
A light to shine upon the road
That leads me to the Lamb."

I now come to the subject of this mournful occasion. The Rev. Thomas Weaver was born in London, where he was educated in the principles and forms of the Church of England; and where he received the rite of confirmation from the hands of that excellent prelate, Bishop Porteous. By what means or at what time, his soul was converted to God, and his religious character formed, I have not learnt: nor do I know what particular circumstances gave rise to his separation from the religious communion in which he had been brought up, or, subsequently, from secular concerns to the duties of the sacred office.

He obtained his ministerial education at Hoxton College, in London: and upon receiving a cordial invitation from the church assembling in this place, he settled among them as their pastor in the year 1798: not, however, till after some hesitation about such a step, arising from the depressed state of the congregation, and the somewhat repulsive aspect, spiritually viewed, of some of its members. His decision seems to have been made under the advice of a ministerial friend, who, in reference to some of those who were least attractive to him, quaintly and quietly said, "Death will soon help you there."

His ministry, commenced under such disadvantageous circumstances, proved, by the blessing of God, successful; and by his diligence, devotedness, and eminent prudence and piety, he soon raised the congregation to very considerable prosperity, both as regards numbers and respectability. His history proves to our young ministers what may be done by entire ministerial devotedness in raising up a sunken congregation; and also

that they should not be in haste either to refuse or quit a situation, because first appearances are unfavourable.

It was Mr. Weaver's privilege in the subsequent years of his pastorate, to be blessed and aided by men in the deacon's office, who held up his hands and encouraged his heart in the oversight of the church; especially one* to whom, not only this society, but the denomination to which it belongs, is deeply indebted for his numerous biographical and apologetical works in commemoration of our most distinguished nonconformist predecessors, whose names are the boast of Christendom, and in exposition of our simple, scriptural, and spiritual polity.

I have known our deceased friend for many years: and though our intercourse was not habitual, it was frequent. To give an extended delineation of his character; a perfect portraiture, I shall not attempt. Is it necessary? What? after his fifty-three years' residence among you? Who needs to be told what manner of man he was, and how good? Has he not during all this time been presenting his bright and beautiful example before

* Sir John Bickerton Williams. The Editor cannot pass this name without commemorating his old master's two peculiar talents, both equally rare. A power of giving advice in matters of religion, with just that mixture of authority and kindness, and so much in the way of suggestive hint, that every word commended itself to the person advised, and sank deep into his heart, and instead of provoking his resentment by the interference, secured his gratitude. The other required pretty much the same constitution of mind. He could always talk to a client, whatever the matters treated of, so that he left the room in a better mood than he entered it, as regarded both himself and his case, and of course in good humour with his adviser. He had also the way of getting rid of any body without offence as soon as he pleased.

you, and commending himself to your judgment as one of the holiest of men, the kindest of friends, the most affectionate of pastors, and the most faithful and evangelical of preachers? He has written his own history, not in words, but in actions, not in books, but in your hearts, and has left the likeness of his character suspended in your memory, on which you will ever delight to gaze, with more fondness than you do even upon the picture of his outer man which adorns your dwellings. Can I not appeal to you on his behalf, as did the apostle Paul to the Thessalonians, and say "Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily, and justly, and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believed. As ye know how we exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you as a father does his children." In an age, and such indeed is every age, when ministerial delinquencies are by no means unknown, and even not uncommon, is it nothing, yea, is it not a great thing to have spent three and fifty years, without even the shadow of a shade of suspicion having ever passed over the bright surface of his spotless reputation! How impressive is the admonition of the apostle, where he says "Giving no offence in any thing that the ministry be not blamed." The sins of ministers affect, disparage, and disgrace the whole ministry. The offences of individuals involve the order in disrepute. But in what instance was the honour of the christian ministry ever compromised by him. On the contrary, was there not that beauty of character, that moral respectability, I may even add, that simple grandeur of spiritual excellency about him which might have made, not only any church thankful to have had him for its pastor, but any denomination to have had him for one of its ministers.

He has left nothing to be explained, defended, or excused. No posthumous dishonour averted during his life, will attach to his name after his death. He has gone down to his grave in the renown of unblemished piety, and no finger of scorn will ever point to his sepulchre, or tongue of scandal ever blur the epitaph that will record his virtues.

It was not only the beauties of holiness, which, like a heavenly lustre, suffused his external deportment, and caused his light to shine before men, but the fire of devotion was ever burning on the altar of his heart, on which he offered up himself a whole burnt offering unto God. Will any one dispute the applicability of the text to him, or question whether he walked with God? He carried devoutness in his habits, and yet it was seriousness without gloom, and spirituality without grimace. For there was an innocent cheerfulness about him, as far from unseemly levity on the one hand as it was from moroseness on the other. You felt when you were in his company, as every one should feel in the society of a christian minister, yes, and a christian man, too, that you were in an atmosphere of piety untainted with the offensive odours of hypocrisy, insincerity, or of assumed sanctity.

It is not pretended that Mr. Weaver was distinguished by what is called genius, whatever that means, by brilliant talents, or striking originality, which may prompt and impel to eloquent speech; though, at the same time, none will deny that his mental faculties were highly respectable, and such as made his pulpit services always acceptable to those, however cultivated their minds, who prefer the truths of the gospel in their own simplicity and power, to that abstract intellectualism

and philosophised christianity, by which, it may be feared, too many, in this day, are supplanting the doctrines of the cross. He aspired not to a higher, but would not be contented with a less honour, than to be a satellite, revolving within the attraction and reflecting the splendour, of the Sun of Righteousness. He ended as he began his ministry with a determination "to know nothing among men save Jesus Christ and him crucified." His first sermon and his last agreed in doctrine, however they might differ in power of intellect and depth of thought. He loved the old gospel, and wanted not a new one: and if he belonged to the old school, as regards the method of preaching it, we may ask whether, if the salvation of souls be the end of preaching, the men of modern ideas can do with the enchantments of their philosophy, what he did, and others are doing, by the attractions of the cross. Let us have as much improvement as possible in logic, criticism, exegesis, rhetoric, sound philosophy, and elocution, the more the better; but God in his great mercy save us from the impiety and folly of seeking after a new gospel. May the pulpits occupied by the descendants of Owen, Howe, Baxter, and the Henrys, never send forth other doctrine than such as were preached by these illustrious men.

Mr. Weaver, I need not say, was an intelligent and consistent Nonconformist: and, like some of his forefathers, would have suffered himself to be immured in yonder jail rather than give up his principles. But a martyr need not be a bigot, and rarely is; and he who could die for one set of principles, can very consistently live in love with those who hold another. Truth and charity may dwell in the same heart, yea, always should,

for they are both the offspring of that wisdom which cometh from above, "which is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated." Our dear friend had a large and loving heart which one denomination of christians was too small to fill; and therefore he made room for the good men of all denominations, with whom it was his delight to dwell in peace, and work in love. With what organisation of holy enterprise, which embraced christians of all sections of the christian church, was it not his honour and his happiness to be associated? Was he not a member of that greatest of all institutions, the British and Foreign Bible Society? Did he not welcome that noble scheme, formed with the design and hope of uniting in the bonds of christian fellowship all denominations of professing christians, the Evangelical Alliance? And did not death find him engaged in the blessed work of associating all the friends of Protestant truth against all the abettors of Popish error? But, apart from this, he was pre-eminently a son of peace. He loved and followed the things that make for peace; and knowing how much contention and disunion are promoted by the employment of careless, rude, and uncandid speech, he weighed his words before he uttered them. And in this way his prudence was as conspicuous as his love of peace. There is a wide difference, I know, between imprudence and immorality, as to their degree of criminality, but I believe that some men's imprudences do more mischief than other men's sins. Families and neighbourhoods are embroiled more by this than by any other cause.

As one proof and display of his loving, peaceable, and prudent conduct, I may refer to the undisturbed harmony in which he has lived with his estimable

colleague. Co-pastorships have so often proved disastrous and unhappy, as to make almost all aged ministers somewhat afraid to engage in them. But here was an instance, (and it is not a solitary one,) in which the aged and the young have lived and loved and worked together, without envy or jealousy; but with the reverent esteem of a son on the one part, and the tender affections of a father on the other, and reciprocal confidence on both. It cannot be denied that Mr. Weaver himself, at one time, was actuated by a dread of a second pastor, and perhaps carried it too far, as many others besides him have done.

There were two or three characteristics of our friend, which were so obvious to all, as scarcely to need enumeration, and which, when mentioned, will be recognised at once as having belonged to him in an eminent degree. Who will question his kindness? a quality of mind upon which so much of the comfort of families, churches, and society depends. How much happiness he must have diffused by that one virtue during a pastorate of fifty-three years. What multitudes must have been soothed in their sorrows, gladdened in their adversity, or comforted in their poverty by the smiles of his benignity, or the words of his sympathy. There are few general excellences which a minister of religion should seek more assiduously to cultivate than this. It is one of the brightest ornaments of, and most useful qualifications for, the pastorate, a department of ministerial action in which Mr. Weaver greatly excelled, but a department which, I am sorry to say, is, in our day, not only neglected, but disregarded; the preacher is everything, the pastor nothing.

Akin to his kindness was his lowly simplicity. Greatly

have I mistaken his character, if to him might not be applied the eulogy of our Lord upon Nathaniel: "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile." There was nothing opaque about him; all was transparent. He was a man known at once, and always to be trusted; and if in any thing, or at any time, he erred (and it is not pretended that he never did), it was not from intention, but from misapprehension, and perhaps more under the guidance of others than the impulses of his own guileless heart.

Gentleness and meekness were also conspicuous traits in his character, and yet he was manly as well as saintly, and could be firm when inflexibility was required, and as some would perhaps say, almost to a fault. And what was that larger branch of his christian character from whence his meekness, gentleness, and simplicity shot forth? His profound humility. With the conscious dignity of an heir of God and a joint heir with Christ, which every believer ought to carry about with him in order to raise his deportment to the elevation of his relationship, he united such a deep sense of unworthiness and imperfection as gave a visible manifestation of unaffected humility to his character, which showed how well he had remembered those words of his Master, "Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart." In his conduct, as a man, there was no Pharisaic spiritual pride, and in his bearing as a minister of religion, no sacerdotal assumption, no official importance, nor jealousy of pastoral prerogative. He was a brother among brothers when with other ministers, and claimed no deference from the youngest of them on account of his age.

He did not pass through life without his trials, and

if under them he ever evinced the smallest want of magnanimity or forbearance, let that be set down to the sharpness and unexpectedness of them. It was permitted by God that one dark cloud should rise in the evening of his life and throw its shadows on his closing scenes; but that, if it never passed entirely away, became so attenuated as not materially to obstruct the rays of the sun of prosperity which through so long a course had shone so brightly upon him. He lived, if not to rejoice in the event, yet to acquiesce in it, as that which had happened for the furtherance of the gospel. To the credit of all parties concerned, it must be stated that this division has issued in as much harmony between the two congregations as could be expected in this world of imperfection, a result, which, under God's blessing, is to be traced up to the prudent and pacific disposition of our venerable friend, and the truly fraternal affection of the two younger ministers. In reference to whom, I would say with something of paternal regard, may the God of love and peace abundantly bless them both, and may the two churches be connected more and more closely in the bonds of Christian love. But by this time I can imagine I hear his own voice speaking to me in almost reproving tones from the excellent glory, and saying, "Enough, more than enough. If there was anything in me as a man or a christian worth mentioning or imitating, remind them of your text at my jubilee, and tell them that I now more intelligently and emphatically repeat it than I did then: by the grace of God I was what I was, and what I am; and have a far clearer view and deeper sense of my many faults and failings than I ever had then."

In ordinary cases the minister who performs the office which I am now discharging, would have to disclose the holy and glorious secrets of the saint's dying chamber, to echo the closing testimony of the departing pastor, and to bring messages of affection and solemn warning from lips that had been vocal for Christ to the verge of life. This is denied to me. Upon those lips from which you would have fondly desired to hear some utterances of a love faithful unto death, the hand of God suddenly affixed the seal of silence. I have nothing to say, but that "Enoch walked with God, and God took him." I must refer you to his holy life for instruction, and to his sudden death for solemn warning. And surely the testimony borne for God, so consistently and so perseveringly, might suffice for all the purposes of ministerial instruction without the closing sermon delivered from the bed of death. And yet do we not all feel a kind of regret, that after such a life as that of our departed friend, we have not been favoured with a death-bed scene which would have been in beautiful harmony with all that went before, and served as a graceful finish of his holy career? What would he not have said to us of the love of Christ; of the power, grace, and faithfulness of God? How he would have charged all that approached his bed of sickness and his scene of death to serve the Lord, and to be earnest in the salvation of their souls. How clear, and emphatic, and solemn, would have been his testimony to those truths which it had been the delight of his life to preach. We do feel a pensive wish (forgive it, O God, if it be sinful), that instead of the sudden extinction of the luminary, and our looking up with astonishment at the heavens from which it had so unexpectedly disappeared, we had

been permitted to watch the slowly setting sun, and to have stood in the mild soft radiance, which, on its late summer's evening, it would have thrown over the landscape from which it was retiring in majesty and glory.

And yet how becoming himself was his death. Did he not love his Master's work? Yes: and the Master loved the workman, and so well pleased was he with his workmanship that he kept him at his labours to the last moment of conscious existence. Death found him at his post. He was no recreant to ministerial obligations. He asked for no early discharge. He wanted no dignified leisure, no premature superannuation. Some, no doubt, hang on upon the church too long, and not only terminate their own usefulness before God ends their lives, but hinder the usefulness of a younger man who might more than fill their place. He might sometimes have sighed for repose as some others do, but he gallantly said to the Captain of his salvation, "I hold my post till discharged by thee." And in what work was he employed when he fell? As an aged veteran in the cause of Protestantism, he was buckling on his armour to fight its battles. If, as a believer, he died at the foot of the cross; as a Protestant, he died at the shrine of Luther. And then the very place of his death was remarkable. How striking that, though a dissenter, he should breathe out his unsectarian, catholic spirit in the house of a clergyman of the Church of England; and that his last converse upon earth should have been with another clergyman of the same communion. Bigots of all denominations, there may be nothing in this to excite your admiration; you have no eye for the beautiful, nor for the lovely, but it will appear something

beautiful in the eyes of the sons and daughters of christian charity. Will not that excellent clergyman feel as if a new sanctity had been given to his dwelling by its having been made the place of ascension to glory for one of God's servants? Will he not feel as if the departed spirit sometimes visited the room to converse with its possessor, and to commune with him on the subject of that love which made them one on earth, and which will unite them in everlasting bonds in heaven.

What remains, but that I express my sympathy, first of all, with that now solitary representative of his family whom your late pastor has left in the midst of you, and who, under the deep sorrow of her desolation, will ever be soothed with the recollection, that it was her lot to be the light of her father's dwelling, and not only the companion, but the comforter, of his old age. May the God of the orphan, and the father of the fatherless be with her. It will be her sorrowful delight never to hear her venerable parent's name repeated, but with affection, respect, and gratitude.

Next I offer my condolence to you, my much esteemed friend and brother now left with the unshared weight of the pastorate of this church. The elder prophet has ascended, and the younger is left alone, exclaiming in surprise, in grief, and in lamentation, "My father, my father, the chariots of Israel and the horsemen thereof!" and inquiring with a mixture of hope and fear, "Where is the Lord God of Elijah?" May the mantle of your glorified colleague be found by you, and with a double portion of his spirit, may you enter on the undivided labours of the ministry in this place, for which you have been well prepared by the beautiful example of your venerable friend, and the wise

counsels which it has been your privilege to receive from him.*

Can I do otherwise than sympathise with this church on the loss of such a pastor, one who, if he had lost the ardour of youth and the matured vigour of middle life, was permitted, and by grace enabled, to exhibit among them the rich and hoary experience of old age. But may I not also call upon you for gratitude that you not only had such a pastor, but that you had him so long? Nor does the demand upon your thankfulness stop here. Though deprived of your senior pastor, you are not as sheep without a shepherd. You are not left destitute. You are not involved suddenly in the perplexity of choosing another minister. Give your confidence under Christ, the head of the church, to him who remains with you, and whose talents, piety, and devotedness, are worthy of it.

Ministers of this town and county with whom our departed friend was associated in the bonds of friendship and in Christian co-operation, you need not to be informed how affectionate a father in Christ you have lost, or how bright a pattern of ministerial excellence has been withdrawn from you. Be followers of him as far as he followed Christ, and that was very far and very closely. Oh, let us hear the voice which comes to us all, both from his life and from his sudden death; and not from his only, for by an impressive coincidence,

* In five particulars the Author eventually resembled Mr. Weaver, and the passages relating to these may be taken as descriptive of himself: their each having had but one church: the affection between themselves and their colleagues: their dying before being laid aside from their work: the suddenness of their death, which prevented the agony of a conscious parting from their friends: and their leaving each a solitary daughter in his house.

another aged servant of Christ ascended to glory the same day as Mr. Weaver, almost as suddenly, and who had been pastor of his church precisely the same number of years. I mean the Rev. Stephen Morrell, of Little Baddow, in the county of Essex. And since then, another friend of mine, the Rev. Christopher Anderson, of Edinburgh, the author of the "Annals of the English Bible," himself also aged, has been called to his rest and his reward. God is gathering home the aged labourers to himself, may those upon whom grey hairs are fast collecting hear the admonition which saith, "Work while it is called to-day: the night cometh when no man can work." Nor should the younger brethren be unmindful of these things. Upon them must soon devolve the whole management of the affairs of the kingdom of Christ as far as instrumentality is concerned; to them will come the pastorate of our churches, the care of our colleges, the guidance of our institutions, when our heads will be beneath the clods of the valley. Oh, my young brethren, be in the fullest, richest sense of the expression, gospel ministers, preachers of the gospel. Hear, on this subject, the dying testimony of that seraphic man, Algernon Wells: the words of dying men have weight, of dying saints have more, and most of all the words of dying ministers. Speaking to a friend of a tract he wished and intended to dictate, he said, "I am anxious to record the thoughts gathered together while lying here. It will be on the 'Glorious Gospel,' and if it please God, I hope to preach that gospel to you as I have never yet done. Not that I reproach myself for having concealed or forgotten it. No, but more than ever I would fain speak of it as I have thought and felt here. I would

make it the first thing, the pre-eminent. All gathered knowledge, all history, all poetry, all pleasant and happy things, all that I am, and have, and know, and think, shall be ranged round and illustrate, but be subordinate to this — the 'Glorious Gospel.' The more I think of it in my long and quiet pondering, the more precious and needful it becomes to me. Yes, I will have the tract printed, but I long to preach it, and if it please God, I will preach it as I never did yet. This is, after all, the one thing, 'The Glorious Gospel.'" May we not imagine that this is just the very testimony that would have been borne by our venerable friend, had he been permitted to speak to us from a sick chamber and a death bed. Yes, and it is borne by all others who love the gospel, and has been borne by some upon their death bed, who had been deficient on this theme in their ministry. Talk they of intellectualism, of philosophy, of rationalism, the best intellectualism, philosophy, and rationalism are all contained in this glorious gospel. Do not, my young brethren, allow yourselves to be seduced by the false lights of modern speculation, from those great truths which, in every age and every section of the church, have proved themselves to be the power of God unto salvation. Place yourselves often in imagination, where, unless your death be as sudden as that of our departed friend, you soon will be in reality, in a sick chamber, and upon a death bed; imagine yourself looking backward upon your ministry, and forward to your appearance before the tribunal of your Master, and ask what strain of preaching, and what manner of life it will most please you to review in these awful moments of ministerial retrospect and anticipation.

I, too, am growing old. I have seen and heard

much of preachers, young and old, and of systems too, ancient and modern. I have had no small share in the doings of the age and of the denomination in which my lot has been cast. I have not been unobservant, or altogether idle, and I am entirely convinced that however new modes of thinking and preaching, by substituting intellectualism, philosophy, or man's intuitional consciousness, for the gospel of Christ, may attract a certain order of mind, and procure for the preacher the approbation of many who are far more eager to have their intellects gratified than their hearts renovated and sanctified, it is nothing but the doctrine of the cross that will convert the soul to God; and though I have not, as the sainted man already alluded to affirmed of himself, either concealed or forgotten that great theme, yet, during whatever may still remain of the term of my ministerial life, it is my determination that this shall be more than ever the study, not only of my mind, but of my heart, and the theme of both my public and my private teaching. And we have all attended the obsequies of our patriarchal friend in vain, if, at his grave and around the pulpit where he for so long a period knew nothing but Jesus Christ and him crucified, we do not, by God's grace, consecrate ourselves afresh to this great work of praising Christ, loving Christ, glorifying Christ.

And now what, in conclusion, shall I say to this deeply affected congregation? He, who for so many years preached to you the word of life from the pulpit I now occupy, will preach to you no more, except by the remembrance of his holy life, faithful ministry, and sudden removal, by all which, he being dead, yet speaketh. He has delivered his last sermon, and you

have heard and had his last prayer. Oh let his death, if you have not profited by his life, be the means of awakening you to a solemn, and practical, and immediate consideration of death, judgment, and eternity. You, too, may die as suddenly as he did. Are you as well prepared as he was? Sudden death to a real christian is one mighty bound from earth to heaven; to an unconverted sinner, one dreadful stumble into hell. Oh, unutterable horror, to be surprised, overwhelmed, confounded in a moment, by exchanging the pleasures, the friends, the possessions, the prospects of earth for those doleful shades, where peace and hope can never dwell. Are you ready, quite prepared by repentance towards God, faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, and a holy life, for death; for speedy death; for sudden death?

Your faithful minister of so many years standing, I repeat, is gone. But I seem to see his venerable form lingering yet in this place, hovering over this assembly. He speaks as from the unseen world, and with the accent and emphasis of eternity: "My once beloved hearers, listen to this my warning from the world into which I have now entered. It is all true, and infinitely more, that I have told you of the momentous nature of God, Christ, Salvation, and Eternity: and though I have watched for your souls as one that must give account, yet, were I again upon earth, I should do so with infinitely more solicitude and earnestness. Oh, hear my voice, by which, though unseen, I speak to you. Prepare to meet your God. Prepare for death, for judgment and eternity. Prepare. Prepare. Till you meet me at the bar of Christ, Farewell."

SERMON

PREACHED ON OCCASION OF THE

CENTENARY OF THE TABERNACLE, AT BRISTOL,

NOVEMBER 25, 1853.

"The memory of the just is blessed:" and "the righteous shall be had in everlasting remembrance." All nations have held in honour the names and deeds of the illustrious dead. When this is kept within due bounds, and not abused to purposes of idolatry or superstition, as is done by paganism which deifies its heroes, and by popery which canonizes its saints, it is a custom, the observance of which is as useful to survivors as it is respectful to the departed. Be it ever recollected, however, that the best way to commemorate the virtues of the dead, is to hold them up not only for the admiration, but for the imitation of the living.

A hundred years ago, Whitefield, in the course of his abundant and successful labours, of which Bristol and its vicinity formed one of the principal scenes, erected this place of Christian worship; and it has been deemed desirable, by those who still continue to enjoy this fruit of his ministrations, to observe a day of grateful commemoration of the event. We commend them for so doing. May we be all solicitous that the services of the day may be so conducted, that while we pay all due respect to the memory of that wonderful man, it shall be less a tribute of praise to him, than to the Master whom he served.

In the selection of a text for the occasion, I have been guided by a desire to find one, which, while it

shall appropriately describe Whitefield's character and conduct, shall serve no less as a model for ours; and perhaps I could not have found one better suited to accomplish both these purposes than that expression of the apostle Paul:

PHILIPPIANS iii, 13.

One thing I do.

Human life is so short, and the faculties of man are so limited, that he who would do some great thing, must do but one; and must do that one with such a concentration of his forces, as, to idle spectators who live only to amuse themselves, looks like enthusiasm, and almost draws upon him the imputation of monomania. "There is something," says Dr. M'All, "fearfully exalted and impressive in the spectacle thus presented of the power of one absorbing interest and one mighty object, to take and keep possession of the soul; to model its whole habitudes and character into its own resemblance; to bend its most vigorous purposes and inveterate prepossessions into subserviency and absolute obedience; to avail itself of the strength even of a giant intellect, and to sustain itself on the resources of the most masculine mind and the most generous heart; till, as the ivy enwreathing the forest oak, it outgrows its utmost height, flourishes in all its luxuriance through the extent of its dimensions, and waves in verdure and loveliness, even amidst ruin and decay. It is a lesson of the richest value to see the purpose thus subduing, while it elevates, the man; the soul transformed, yet vanishing amidst the irradiations of its brightness, and its whole structure penetrated, purified, and effulgent with its consuming splendour, and like the polished surface of a

mirror, hid in the lustre of its own reflections." But then what care and solicitude should be exercised in the selection of that one supreme, absorbing object. It should be something lawful, for how wicked to lavish a whole life upon what is illicit: something important, for how frivolous, to expend existence for a bauble: somthing practicable, for how foolish to exhaust the soul upon what is clearly unattainable! With such an object, unity of purpose, wisdom in the choice of means to accomplish it, and resolute determination of will, are the very grandeur and completeness of human character.

And what was Whitefield's one thing? He himself shall tell you. In a letter written to a friend on the day of his ordination, occurs the following sublime and comprehensive, yet simple expression: "I hope the good of souls will be my only principle of action. I call heaven and earth to witness, that when the bishop laid his hand upon me, I gave myself up like a martyr for Him who hung upon the cross for me." As the oak lies enfolded in the acorn, so did his whole future life lie wrapped up in that one sentence. All his amazing labours; his numerous journeys and voyages; his sermons and his letters; his personal religion and his prayers; his public addresses and his private conferences, were but the expansion of this one sentence, the development of that one principle, the good of souls is my only principle of action. In that he lived, and moved, and had his being. So completely had this absorbed him, that he seemed to have no second object. This he thoroughly understood, deeply felt, and constantly kept in view, as the end of his calling and his business in life. The Pyramids or the Alps are not more clearly

seen, or more steadily kept in view, by the traveller who is journeying to behold those stupendous wonders of nature and art, than was the salvation of souls by this devoted man. His concern for this was so intense, that his soul seemed to be ever oppressed with heaviness for the longing he bore towards it. Foster, in his essay on "Decision of Character," has very properly placed him in juxta position with Howard, whom he had just represented as visiting Rome with such an intense severity of conviction that he had one thing to do, as to refuse himself time to survey the magnificence of its ruins. "Unless," says the essayist, "the eternal happiness of mankind be an insignificant concern, and the passion to promote it an inglorious distinction, I may cite George Whitefield as a noble instance of this attribute of the decisive character, this intense necessity of action. The great cause, which was so languid a thing in the hands of many of its advocates, assumed in his administrations an unmitigable urgency."

And what is it that should now be considered, both by preachers and people, the one great end of the ministerial office, and the one thing to be done by those that fill it? Has the matter changed since Whitefield's time? Or was he only, and Wesley his equally illustrious compeer, to whom, also a great part of this sermon applies, were they only, I say, under obligation to make the good of souls the object of their lives? Did not the apostle write it for all times, all countries, and all churches, as a description of the object of the Christian ministry? "They watch for your souls as they that must give account?" Have men ceased to have souls? Or are their souls no longer lost? Or is

there now no Saviour for them? Has the term of Christianity expired, or the day of salvation for ever gone by? If these questions are answered in the negative, as of course they must be, then let it be published as with a seraph's voice, and let its echoes roll through every congregation and over every pulpit throughout our world, that the one thing every minister of Jesus Christ has to do, that which he must understand, keep constantly in mind, desire with intense ardour, make the centre of all his closet exercises, study, pursuits, pulpit labours, and intercourse with his friends, is the good of souls. It is the very end and purpose of his ministry, that to which on the day of his ordination he professed before heaven, earth, and hell, solemnly to dedicate his whole being; and for which he did then, in effect, make an eternal abjuration of every inferior object, and of all the indolent, lukewarm, and quiescent feelings, even in regard to this. This was the object which engaged the omniscient mind of God in the councils of eternity; the object on which the Son of God was fixed when he humbled himself unto death, even the death of the cross; for which the Spirit of God was poured out from on high; for which the Scriptures of eternal truth were penned; for which apostles lived, reformers laboured, and martyrs bled. Yes, my brethren, as long as we are keeping this object in view we are in sympathy, yea, in fellowship, with all these and in all this. In seeking this object we are, as compared with all other labourers and operators, like the angel of the Apocalypse, standing in the sun. What so benevolent, what so noble, so sublime, so God-like, so eternal, as this! The one thing of the poet, of the painter,

of the sculptor, and the architect, however great their genius, or lofty their ambition, is of the earth, earthy; and the noblest of their productions will at length serve but to deck the funeral pile of the world, while glory, honour, and immortality shall characterise ours. How pitiable, how grovelling, the ambition of him who is intent only upon intellectualism, philosophy, eloquence; whose solicitude is fixed upon writing and preaching what he deems to be well composed sermons; whose aim is to please the people who run after a talented man, and whose reward is the plaudits of his audience. Poor, low-minded creature, to be thus sinking down from the infinite, the divine, the eternal, to the finite, the human, the temporal: to seek men's applause instead of their salvation: to be satisfied with the reward of an actor upon the stage, instead of the approving smile and public testimony of God, the judge of all, and Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, delivered before the innumerable company of angels and the spirits of just men made perfect. And then the cruelty of that man's heart, as well as the littleness of his mind, who, with immortal souls going down to the pit before his eyes, and the means of their salvation in his hands, can be taken up with any other object whatever than plucking them as brands from the burning. Does Whitefield now repent of "the one thing" he selected as the object of his life? Have the light of eternity and the science of heaven revealed to him that he was mistaken in making the good of souls his only principle of action? Judge ye. Is there a single individual who, whatever he may now be making the object of his ministry, does not know that if he were, like Paul, caught up into the third heavens, he should come back, like him, impressed

with the utter littleness and worthlessness of everything, as an end of the ministry, but the salvation of immortal souls?

I just before spoke of Howard; and I would not detract an atom from the fame of that noble-hearted philanthropist, nor extinguish a single ray of the glory that encircles his brow. He who familiarized himself with misery to alleviate it, and exposed himself to pestilence, and died at last a martyr to philanthropy, is worthy of all the honours which an admiring nation and posterity bestowed upon him; but Whitefield was a man of even sublimer philanthropy than Howard. Howard's was mercy to the body, Whitefield's to the soul. Howard moved through his course amidst the admiration of society, Whitefield amidst its scorn and contempt. Statues were erected for Howard; the pillory would have been erected for Whitefield, if his enemies could have had their wish. Both now have their reward, but can we doubt whose crown is the weightiest and shines the brightest?

II. Let us now consider how Whitefield sought his object, and by what means he accomplished it. That he did accomplish it to a wonderful extent, you know, and that he was the instrument of saving myriads. He sought the good of souls. How? How should he seek it, but in that only way in which God has determined to effectuate it? Be it recollected, souls are saved by the power and prerogative of God. Man, the greatest of men, Whitefield, Wesley, yea, Peter, Paul and John, are but instruments, and, as instruments, must do the Master's work in the Master's way. It is folly, presumption, wickedness, to attempt to think of supplementing God's means of saving souls by man's. And

what, then, is God's instrument for this work? It is written as with a sunbeam on the page of revelation. "The preaching of the cross is unto them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God." Or as the Apostle says in another place. "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation unto every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek." This is very definite and very explicit, and since there is no limitation, caution, or reserve, it seems intended to apply to all times, places, and persons, and to be set forth as God's method to be used by man, for saving souls, down to the end of time. Whitefield believed and acted upon this. He did not preach a new gospel, but revived the old one. He, Wesley, and the whole Methodistic company, did not pretend to any new doctrine. And how did they wield the old one? Mr. Isaac Taylor has analysed the Methodism of the past, and reduced it to four elements. 1. Its preachers awoke the dormant religious consciousness of man's relation to God, as his Ruler and Judge. 2. They produced a deep conviction and sense of this relationship individually, and thus awoke a sense of personal sin. 3. To this awakened consciousness they presented for relief the remedial system of the gospel; and 4thly, they did all this in a spirit of evangelical philanthropy. Now this is all true. Than Whitefield, no man ever more exactly answered to Mr. Hall's inimitable description of a good preacher. "Without descending to such a minute specification of circumstances as shall make our addresses personal, they ought unquestionably to be characteristic, that the conscience of the audience may feel the hand of the preacher searching it, and every individual know where

to class himself. The preacher who aims at doing good will endeavour above all things to insulate his hearers, to place each of them apart, and render it impossible for him to escape by losing himself in the crowd. At the day of judgment, the attention excited by the surrounding scene, the strange aspect of nature, the dissolution of the elements, the last trump, will have no other effect than to cause the reflections of the sinner to return with a more overwhelming tide upon his own character, his sentence, his unchanging destiny; and amid the innumerable millions that surround him, he will mourn apart. It is thus the Christian minister should prepare the tribunal of conscience, and turn the eyes of each one of his hearers upon himself." One would imagine that Mr. Hall, when he penned this striking paragraph, had been studying the character of Whitefield's preaching, of whose extraordinary success, as well as of that of Wesley, this was one of the most powerful causes. It is that general and vague, loose and indiscriminate manner of discussing the subjects of divine truth, and applying the promises and threatenings of the gospel characteristic of so many preachers, which, as a natural consequence, prevents their success. They are like portrait painters who merge all the peculiarities of the individual in the generalities of the race. No wonder they do not convert souls; the wonder would be if they did.

But we may put Mr. Taylor's truly philosophical analysis of Methodistic preaching in a more popular form, a form that will perhaps be better understood by the multitude, if I say that the staple of this great man's preaching was the law for conviction and repentance, and the gospel for faith and consolation. He awakened and alarmed the conscience by the thunders

of Sinai; he comforted and supported the convinced sinner by the still small voice of Calvary. He carried the scales of divine justice into the pulpit to which he brought his hearers, and then pronounced the awful truth, "Thou art weighed in the balance and found wanting;" and when despair was creeping over the soul of the astonished, convicted, and trembling penitent, he directed him to the source whence the deficiency was to be supplied.

I am not now justifying all the language and modes of representation which Whitefield and his followers employed to set forth the nature, distinctions, purposes, and eternal obligations of the law and the gospel. I deem it one of the infelicities which they inherited from the Puritans of the sixteenth, and the Nonconformists of the seventeenth century, that they sometimes degraded spiritual truths into the forms of commercial transactions, and disfigured theology with an uncouth phraseology, which, without going to the length of expurgation recommended by our great essayist, I by no means wish to be considered the stereotyped model of modern orthodoxy. Still I have not attained to that theological prudishness or fastidiousness, which, out of compliment to the philosophical tendencies of the age, would abjure the glorious, and venerable, and even sacred terminology of Holy Scripture. I know very well that these terms in the vernacular version are translations, and that if others can more accurately convey the original words, they may be not only innocently, but properly introduced. Be it so. But do they more accurately convey these original words? What can we find better adapted to express the mind and meaning of the Holy Spirit than the old but magnificent words, justification, sancti-

fication, regeneration, and adoption? I am afraid that many of the attempts of modern criticism are but concealed attacks upon the old theology. Words are the signs of things, and with the words will go the things. By no metempsychosis will the old ideas transmigrate into new forms of speech. What we still want, what we must have, if souls are saved, is to have set forth in as elegant language, as chaste composition, as powerful logic, as graceful rhetoric, as sound exegesis, and as varied illustrations as the improvements of modern criticism can give it, the law in all its purity, strictness, and force, and the gospel in all its fulness, richness, and sweetness.

It is never to be forgotten, amidst all the fluctuations of opinion, all the vicissitudes of earthly affairs, and even the advance of civilization, science, and social improvement, that human nature, in its spiritual condition and its relation to God, remains unchanged. The lapse of ages will never wear out our natural corruption, nor will the progress of science and advance of civilization eradicate it. Man as he is born into the world, and grows up in it, will still, as ever, need both the redemption and the regeneration of the gospel of Christ. Amidst the light of the nineteenth century, he as much needs this as he did amidst the darkness of the middle ages; it is as needful to the philosopher of Great Britain, as to the savage of the Pacific ocean: and let science carry on its discoveries, and art multiply its inventions, and literature polish the surface of society, as they may, the redemption and regeneration of the gospel will be as much needed by our posterity, amidst the universal triumphs of civilization, and the light and glory of the millennium as they now are. Infidels may babble as

they please, and it is but babble, after all, though it calls itself philosophy, about society outgrowing the need of old Christianity. They may just as rationally talk about human nature outgrowing the need of the old laws of the material universe; doing without the old sun to enlighten us, the old atmosphere to sustain us, the old water to refresh us, and the old corn to nourish us, as without the old gospel to renew, sanctify, and save mankind; for the relation of these to our material nature is not one whit more fixed and unalterable than is the gospel as a remedial system to our lapsed and diseased moral nature.

All this babble, however, may be expected from men who, as the bats and owls, hate the light of the gospel altogether; but is it not a wonder, a lamentation, and a woe, to find (as they are found also in other sections of the Christian church,) men coming out from our churches, educated in our colleges, occupying our pulpits, and, professedly at least, holding our creed, and yet, under pretext of adaptation to the age, either slurring over the gospel, or covering it with such a philosophical garb, as to make it another gospel. Not like Paul, boasting of not being ashamed of the gospel, but acting as if they were ashamed of it. Are there no preachers and writers, who answer to Isaac Taylor's description, and say "We find that our Christian argument takes little effect upon the mass of men. Nor ought we much to wonder that it should be so, for this style of reasoning, which had its rise in dark times, stands in no true relationship towards the human mind, in its present advanced condition; it is thoroughly obsolete, nor ought it to be required of the educated men of these enlightened times, to listen to that which is so stale. The

gospel has been misunderstood, as everything else came to be misunderstood, during the middle ages. Then the theology that was unadvisedly compacted at the Reformation was a conglomerate of logical, metaphysical, polemical, and political truths and errors, an inextricably tangled mass. The work, therefore, that is now to be done, and which is to be done by us, the rising ministry, is (with all due reverence for Holy Scripture) to re-consider everything, to pass our creeds through the refining fires of the modern philosophy, to render the substance of theology into the intelligible terms of the modern philosophy; in a word, what we have to do is, to put forth the acceptance of these enlightened times on which we have fallen, a philosophy of salvation. Thus, in substance, have some reasoned with themselves, and are attempting to reason with others, and on such grounds have they addressed themselves to the labour, a labour how vain, of engineering a road upon an easy slope, up the steeps of Paradise, from the levels of disbelief, and so that the table-land of heaven may henceforth be laid open to the feet of all men."

We hear much in our days about this adaptation of the gospel to the age. There is no word I more hate or love; dread or desire; according to the sense in, or the purpose for which, it is used, than this word adaptation as applied to preaching. Now, if by adaptation be meant more philosophy and less Christianity; more of cold abstract intellectualism and less of popular, simple, earnest, statement of gospel truth; more profound discussion and artificial elaboration addressed to the learned few, and less of warm-hearted appeal to the multitude; may God preserve us from such adaptation, for

it is high treason against truth and the salvation of souls. But if by this be meant a stronger intelligence, a chaster composition, a sterner logic, a more powerful rhetoric, a more correct criticism, and a more varied illustration, but all employed to set forth the Gospel as comprehending those two great words redemption and regeneration, let us have it, we need it, and come in ever such abundance, it will be a blessing.

Adaptation! The gospel is adaptation from beginning to end, to every age of time, and to all conditions of humanity. It is God's own adaptation. It is he who knows every ward of the lock of man's nature, that has constructed this admirable key; and all the miserable tinkering of a vain and deceitful philosophy can make no better key, nor can all the attempts of a philosophising theology, make this key better fit the wards of the lock.

Adaptation! Was not the gospel in all its purity and simplicity adapted to human nature as it existed in commercial, philosophical, Corinth? and did not Paul think so when he determined to know nothing there but Christ and him crucified? Was it not by this very gospel, which many are beginning to imagine is not suited to an intellectual and philosophic age, that Christianity fought its first battles, and achieved its victories over the hosts of darkness? Against the axe, the stake, the sword of the gladiator, and the lions of the amphitheatre, against the ridicule of wits, the reasoning of sages, the interests, influence, and craft of the priesthood; against the prowess of armies, and the brute passions of the mob, Christianity, strong in its weakness, sublime in its simplicity, potent in its isolation, asking and receiving no protection from the

sceptre of the monarch or the sword of the warrior, went forth to do battle with the wisdom of Greece and the mythology of Rome. Everywhere it prevailed, and gathered its laurels from the snows of Scythia, the sands of Africa, the plains of India, and the green fields of Europe. With the Gospel alone she overturned the altars of impiety in her march. Power felt his arm wither at her glance. She silenced the lying oracles by the majesty of her voice, and extinguished the deceptive light of philosophy in the schools, till at length she ascended upon the ruins of the temples, the idols, and the altars she had demolished, to the throne of the Cæsars, and with the diadem on her brow, and the purple on her shoulders, gave laws to the world from that very tribunal where she had on her first appearance been condemned as a malefactor.*

Adaptation! Is not justification by faith the very substance of the Gospel, and was it not by this doctrine, that Luther effected the enfranchisement of the human intellect, from the chains of slavery which had been forged in the Vatican; achieved the liberation of half Europe from the yoke of Rome; and gave an impulse to human thought and vital Christianity which has not yet spent itself, and never will, till it issues in the jubilee of the nations and the glories of the millennium?

Adaptation! Did not Whitefield move this kingdom almost to its centre; and equally so our then great Transatlantic colony to its extremities, fascinating alike the colliers of Kingswood and the citizens of the metropolis; and by this mighty theme enable myriads to burst the chains of sin and Satan, and to walk abroad,

* See Dr. Mason's Funeral Sermon for Mrs. Graham.

disenthralled by the mighty power of redeeming grace?

Adaptation! Is not this gospel now proving in heathen countries its power to raise the savage into the civilized man, the civilized man into the saint, and in this ascending scale of progression the saint into the seraph?

And yet with these proofs of the power of the Gospel to adapt itself to every age of the world, and to every condition of humanity, there are those who want something else to effect the regeneration of mankind. "And I if I be lifted up, will draw all men to me." So said the Saviour of men. The cross is for all ages and all countries the great moral magnet to draw men from barbarism to civilisation, from sin to holiness, from misery to happiness, and from earth to heaven; and it were as rational to say the load-stone had lost its original property of polar attraction, and that the mariner's compass is an old, stale invention, and must now be replaced with some new device better adapted to the modern light of science, as to suppose that the doctrine of the cross had become effete, and must give way to some new phase of theological truth.

III. I now consider the manner in which Whitefield carried out his one purpose into action. One thing I do: and how did he accomplish it?

Never was the joyful sound sent over the world by a more magnificent voice. All his biographers labour, as do the historians of Greece, in describing the power of Demosthenes, to make us understand his wondrous oratory. Perhaps, after all, that which gives us the most vivid idea of it is, not the crowds it attracted, moved, and melted, but that it warmed the cold and calculating Franklin, and fascinated the philosophical and sceptical

Hume. Heaven rarely ever gave, or gives to man, the faculty of speech in such perfection. But what is particularly worthy of notice is, that he trusted not to its native power, but increased that power by assiduous cultivation. His matchless elocution was not only an endowment, but an acquirement. If he preached a sermon twenty times, he went on to the last, improving his method of delivering it, both as to tones and action: not for theatrical display, (no man was ever more free from that,) but to carry out his "one thing," the salvation of souls. He knew, and deeply and philosophically entered into, the meaning of that text, "Faith cometh by hearing;" and he also knew that attentive hearing comes by the power of speaking. With such a theme as the Gospel; with such an object as salvation; with such an aim as eternity, and such a master to serve as Christ, he would not give utterance to such subjects, and for such purposes, in careless and slovenly speech. He studied to be the orator, that he might thus pluck souls as brands from the burning. In this let us imitate him. Of all our faculties, that of speech is, perhaps, least cultivated, yet is most susceptible of cultivation, and pays best the pains bestowed upon it. My brethren, speech is the great instrument of our ministerial labour. Our assault upon the rebel town of man's soul is to be carried on, and our entrance to be effected, to use the language of Bunyan, at ear-gate. The tongue, rather than the pen, is the weapon of most of us. For the love of souls, let us endeavour to be good speakers. With the loftiest themes in the universe for our subjects, do, do, let us endeavour to speak of them in some measure worthily. It is an instructive and astounding, and to us humiliating and disgraceful fact, that the

stage-player, whether he play in comedy or in tragedy, takes ten times more pains to give effective utterance to his words of folly or vice, for the amusement of his audience, than we to eternal and momentous truths for the salvation of ours. The stage seems the only arena where the power of oratory is much studied. Should this be?

A few characteristics of Whitefield's manner deserve emphatic mention, and particular attention, as connected with the execution of his one great purpose. The first I notice is solemnity. He never, as did some of his followers, degraded the pulpit by low humour and low wit; abounding in anecdote, and even in action, he was uniformly solemn. His deep devotional spirit contributed largely to this, for his piety was the inward fire which supplied the ardour of his manner. He was eminently a man of prayer; and had he been less prayerful, he would also have been less powerful. He came into the pulpit from the closet where he had been communing with God, and could no more be trifling, merry, or humorous at such a time, than could Moses when he came down from the mount to the people; or the high priest when he came out from the blazing symbols of the Divine presence between the cherubim in the holy of holies; or Isaiah when he saw the Lord of Hosts, high and lifted up, with his train filling the temple. Happily the age and taste for pulpit buffoonery is gone, I hope never to return. "'Tis pitiful to court a grin when you should woo a soul." It was the stamp and impress of eternity upon his preaching that gave Whitefield such power. He spake like a man that stood upon the borders of the unseen world, alternately rapt in ecstacy as he gazed upon the felicities of heaven, and

convulsed with terror as he heard the howlings of the damned, and saw the smoke of their torment ascending from the pit for ever and ever. His maxim was to preach, as Apelles painted, for eternity. He said if ministers preached for eternity they would act the part of true Christian orators. And tell me, my brethren, what are all the prettinesses, the beauties, or even sublimities of human eloquence, what the similes, metaphors, and other garniture of rhetoric, what the philosophy and intellectualities which many in this day are aiming at, to move, and bow, and conquer the human soul, compared with "the powers of the world to come?"

But there was another characteristic of Whitefield's manner, and that was its tenderness. Our Lord, as to his humanity, was a man of sorrows, and, therefore, of tears; so was Paul, so was Whitefield. Perhaps the last somewhat too much so, at any rate far too much so for any preaching but his own; and with him the fountain of his tears was somewhat too full and flowing. But oh, what an apology for this, and what a stroke of pathetic eloquence was that appeal, when on one occasion he said, "You blame me for weeping, but how can I help it, when you will not weep for yourselves, although your immortal souls are on the verge of destruction, and for aught I know you are hearing your last sermon, and may never more have an opportunity to have Christ offered to you." Man is an emotional as well as an intellectual creature, and sympathy is one of the powers of our physical and mental economy. The passions are of an infectious nature, and men feel more in a crowd than in solitude. The maxim of the ancient poet is still true, "If you wish me to weep, weep your-

self." Whitefield's tears drew forth those of his audience, and his pathos softened their hearts for the impressions of the truth. It is forgotten by many preachers that they may do much by the heart, as well as by the head. We are not the teachers of logic, mathematics, metaphysics, or natural philosophy, which have nothing to do with the heart, but of religion, the very seat of which is there; and we address ourselves not only to the logical, but to the æsthetical part of man's complex nature. I know we must convince by argument, but we must not stop in the judgment, but go on to reach the heart, and we ourselves must feel as well as reason. Clear, but cold, is too descriptive of much modern preaching. It is the frosty moonlight of a winter's night, not the warm sunshine of a summer's day. A cold preacher is likely to have cold hearers. Cold! What when the love of God, the death of Christ, the salvation of souls, the felicities of heaven, and the torments of hell are the theme? Enthusiasm here is venial compared with lukewarmness.

Need I say that earnestness was characteristic of Whitefield's preaching? Yes, that one word, perhaps, more than any other in our language, is its epitome. An intense earnestness marked his whole career, and was carried to such a pitch as to incur, as did that of Paul, the imputation of madness. The salvation of souls was so entirely the one thing that engrossed his soul, his time, his labours, that not a step deviated from it. Every moment, every day, was an approximation to it. His devotions, his recreations, (if he had any,) his journeys, his voyages, his sermons, his correspondence, all referred to this one end. His exertion never relaxed for a moment, and he, with his great

compeer, Wesley, made the trial so seldom made, what is the utmost effect which, in the way of saving souls, may be granted to any one preacher of the gospel in any age or country.

What may not be done, and is not done, by earnestness? It gives some success to any error, however absurd or enormous, and to any scheme of wickedness, however flagrant and atrocious. What is it that has given such success to popery, to infidelity, to Mormonism? Earnestness. And shall the apostles and advocates of error be more in earnest than the friends of truth? Whitefield often quoted Betterton the player, who affirmed that the stage would soon be deserted if the actors spoke like the preachers. And what would empty the playhouse, that is, dulness and coldness, does often empty the meeting-house. "Mr. Betterton's answer to a worthy prelate," says Whitefield, "is worthy of lasting regard. When asked how it is that the clergy, who speak of things real, affected the people so little, and the players, who speak only of things imaginary, affected them so much, replied, 'My Lord, I can assign but one reason—we players speak of things imaginary as though they were real, and too many of the clergy speak of things real as though they were imaginary.'" It is not always so. Many a preacher, even in our own day, by the unaffected earnestness of his manner, carries away his audience upon the tide of his own feeling. They hear what he says, they see what he feels, his eye helps his tongue, the workings of his countenance disclose the secrets of his heart; his manner is a lucid comment upon his matter, breaks down the limits which words impose upon the communication of ideas, and gives them not only an apprehension of their meaning,

but a sense of the importance of his subject, which unimpassioned language and manner never could have done.

I mention but one thing more characteristic of this great man, and which it would be well for us to imitate, and that is, his dauntless courage. See him not only facing mobs, defying threats, and even setting up his pulpit amidst the wild uproar of a London fair, (the boldest achievement that a speaker ever accomplished,) but holding on his noble career unterrified, and working amidst the storm of obloquy that came upon him from so many quarters. Who that has ever read, can ever forget Cowper's exquisite description of him?*

What but guilty cowardice is it, false and pusillanimous shame, that keeps us in these days from some novel and bolder method of aggression upon the domain of darkness? Are we not wanting here in that moral courage which would make us, when conscious we are doing right, indifferent to the stare of the ignorant, and the wonder of the timid; to the shaft of ridicule and the malignant censure of the cynic? How sadly we are fettered by custom and trammelled by conventionality. How little are we disposed to go out of the usual track even in saving souls. Very few are disposed to imitate the boldness, ingenuity, and novel thought of that noble-hearted brother, who hired a disengaged theatre in the city where he dwelt, and for four months preached there, to listening and well behaved crowds, the gospel of salvation; and for his reward had very many given to him, who are his joy now and will be his crown of rejoicing

* [The passage was then quoted with the remark, "no apology will be asked for its introduction here, though somewhat long, and perhaps poetry will be a relief, for a short season, to prose."]

in the presence of Christ at his coming. Who can see Paul on Mars' Hill, addressing himself to the sages and their followers of all sects, and preaching to them a doctrine so repugnant to the mythology of the temple and the philosophy of the schools, as Christ, the last judgment, and the resurrection of the body, without being impressed with the moral courage of such an act? It is this spiritual heroism which is wanted in our modern preaching, and, indeed, which was no less needful when the Methodists commenced their preaching. Nor is it only in this unwillingness to go off from our own ground for saving souls that our guilty cowardice is seen, but in the disposition to shirk the more solemn and searching truths of revelation. Are we not giving way too much to the fastidiousness of modern taste and refinement, which is craving after smooth things; which desires the sentimental, the picturesque, the imaginative; but turns with disgust from the solemn, the alarming, the awakening? Are we not too gentle and courteous to mention such a word as "Hell" to modern ears polite? Are we not too fearful to break in with the thunders of a violated law upon those who are at ease in Zion? I do not ask for a gross revolting method of describing the punishment of the wicked, as if the preacher delighted in harrowing up the feelings of his audience. This is as disgusting as if, in order to keep men from crime, our judges and magistrates were ever and anon giving a minute detail of the process of an execution, and the convulsive pangs of an expiring wretch suspended to the beam of the gibbet. We ask not for a harsh, scolding, and denunciating style of preaching; but we do want more of the unflinching boldness, and the dauntless courage, which are necessary to fidelity, and

absolutely essential to him who would win souls to Christ. It is too generally forgotten, that our Lord Jesus, who was incarnate love, was the most solemn and awful of all preachers. He whose gentle spirit so often breathed out itself in invitation, and whose compassion melted into tears, at other times robed himself in terror, and uttered the most alarming peals of divine indignation. What we need for our ministry is this mixture of tenderness and solemnity, which entered so deeply into the ministry of Christ, and was so characteristic of his servant, whose labours we this day commemorate and commend.

IV. And now, did time permit and necessity require, I would show what, in seeking "this one thing," Whitefield accomplished.

I might speak of the awakening of the spirit of piety so long slumbering beneath the towers of the establishment, and the humbler fabrics of nonconformity; of the conversions to God of myriads of souls both in America and these kingdoms; of the erection of chapels large and commodious, both in this city and neighbourhood, and in the metropolis; of the revival of evangelical religion within the pale of the church of England; of all that mighty moral machinery constructed for the world's conversion, which so remarkably distinguishes this age, Bible, missionary, and tract societies, which have all in some sense risen out of the Methodistic spirit of this prince of preachers, Whitefield, and of that still more extraordinary and more extensively and permanently useful man, John Wesley. But I pass over all this which will be brought before you this evening, and just mention one particular and isolated instance of his

usefulness, the fruits of which remain with us to this day, and will remain in a printed form with the church of Christ when we are gone to our rest.

One venerable, venerated form still lingers among us, though now retired into the shades of dignified seclusion, and waiting amidst much infirmity and suffering for his dismission to his rest; one in whom the poetic words of Scripture have been so accurately and so beautifully fulfilled, "The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree, and grow like a cedar in Lebanon; he shall bring forth fruit unto old age." You will anticipate, perhaps, the name of Mr. Jay, for years the patriarch, and I may add, the glory of our ministry. In a letter I lately received from that hoary servant of our Lord, after referring with deep interest to these services, he says, in his own playful manner, "By the way I am a kind of grandson of Whitefield, he begat Winter, and Winter begat me." And were Whitefield still alive, or could have visited our world in times past to hear Mr. Jay as we have heard him, or to read those ten precious volumes so full of the same great truths which he himself preached; volumes which will be read wherever the English language is known, and evangelical piety is loved, how would he have rejoiced over this his noble descendant, whose pen has made us more intimately acquainted with the subject of this discourse by his memoirs of Winter than we even were before; and who has told us just enough of his spiritual grandsire's weaknesses to prevent our admiration from being exaggerated into unseemly adulation. Peace to thee, aged servant of the Lord, may He whom thou hast so long and so well served be with thee in thy retirement and

render the late evening of thy life as calm as thy present sufferings will allow! May the clouds that have gathered round thy setting sun only serve magnificently to reflect the lustre of thy graces!

And now, in conclusion, beloved brethren, what further use shall we make of this day's services? What shall be our reflections, our purposes, and our doings? shall it be all empty, ineffectual admiration and praise of Whitefield, or shall it issue in a revival of his spirit, in our churches and their pastors? Think not that by such an inquiry, I am suggesting that our times are like those, when he by the sovereignty of God was given with Wesley, to our country and the world; given as a seraph from heaven, to commence a new era in the history of the church. Christendom was then like the dead sea in which nothing lived, and his ministry was like the waters that issued from the temple and flowed through the desert into the sea, till everything lived where the river came. There were no Sunday schools, no Bible, Missionary, or Tract Societies. The world was dead, the church asleep. What has not been done in the century which has elapsed since he left the scene? Could he come again upon earth, and drop down into our metropolis in the month of May, would he believe it was the same world? Say not, therefore, "What is the reason that the former days were better than these, for thou dost not wisely consider this matter." Still, I confess I am sometimes ready to ask, May not much of this be as the grass and flowers that bloom in the church-yard, verdure and beauty above, with decay and death beneath? Is the work of conversion going on with vigour under our ministry? Does the mighty wind which, at the sound of the prophet's voice, swept

over the valley of dry bones, and caused first the shaking, then the vivification, and then the exceeding great army of living men, attend our ministry? My honoured brethren, is it so? Does the quickening spirit enter dead souls with us, as might be expected if we were faithful and in earnest?

I know we may not expect all that was granted to Whitefield; nor may it be looked for that we should use all the means he used. There was no doubt much of sovereignty and peculiarity in his whole history. His wondrous oratory, the peculiarity of his times, the novelty of his measures, the daring courage of his lion-hearted zeal, the exclusiveness of the pulpit as the means of popular instruction and conversion, gave him advantages which we do not possess. But have we not advantages which he did not possess? And is not God's mercy the same, Christ's death the same, the gospel the same, as they ever were? Have we not the same means of conversion to use, the same power of conversion to rely upon? Let us not lay the flattering unction to our souls and say, it is all to be resolved into divine sovereignty that we are not in some measure and according to our circumstances, as useful as he was. I admit that were he again upon earth, he would not altogether be as useful as he was when he was here, nor could he adopt all the measures he did. The times are changed, and measures and results change with them. But how intensely to be desired is it to have that seraphic, burning ardour, flaming at our great convocations, and kindling in our cold hearts a fire like that which glowed in his. I tell you, brethren, it is the spirit of this devoted man accommodating itself to the circumstances of the age, that is wanted, I mean the passion for saving

souls. O could we this day, each and all of us, adopt the text as our motto; could we go home determined to take up this unity of purpose, this concentration of energy and effort, and resolve that the labours of the study and the pulpit, of the lecture and the Bible class, of our home and foreign service, shall all, all be poured into this one thing, the salvation of souls; could we, instead of attempting to preach great sermons, fine ones, eloquent ones, endeavour to preach good ones, and account those only good ones which tend to the good of souls: or could we strive to be great, eloquent, and even grand, as we might and should, but all to save souls; and were this to pervade our whole denomination, should we then have to complain of a want of conversions? What are we really doing for this? I ask for no wild enthusiasm; no startling extravagance; no pulpit trickery; no spiritual eccentricities; nothing but what the soberest reason and the most intelligent religion will justify: but I do want a more intense earnestness, a more inventive mind, a more eager desire. I want something more than effete formality and dull routine. I want all the anxiety, diligence, seriousness, awe, and trembling, which would be produced by a due sense of the value of souls, the danger of their being lost, and our responsibility for doing all we can to save them. My brethren, my brethren, souls are perishing all around us; "hell hath enlarged herself, and opened her mouth without measure, and their glory, and their multitude, and their pomp, and he that rejoiceth are descending into it." And here are we near this scene of destruction, to turn back the giddy throng, and prevent their rushing to destruction; and if in such a situation, and called to such an occupation, we can think of anything else but

having compassion on their souls; saving them with fear, pulling them out of the fire; do we not deserve to perish ourselves, and is not this guilty indifference itself an evidence that we are on the road to perdition?

And what shall I now say to those who are not called to preach the word of life? Learn what kind of ministers the world needs for its regeneration, and which the church should ask of God. I admit, as I have already done, that the circumstances of the world and the church are in some measure altered, and that therefore we need pastors, somewhat different from this illustrious man, but still men imbued with his spirit, his piety, his dependence upon the Spirit of God, his love for souls, his devotedness, and his earnestness. Do not, I entreat you, corrupt the pulpit, and let not the pulpit corrupt you. You are right in demanding intelligence, learning, eloquence, elocution; but let not this be all you wish, and let it be your desire that all these may be baptised with the Spirit of God, consecrated at the cross, and employed in the salvation of souls. Be intent upon your own salvation. Be this your "one thing," and seek men who shall help you to accomplish it. Fix your eye, your heart, your hope, on eternal life, and consider that the chief design of the pulpit is to assist you to gain that. Do not allow yourselves to be fascinated by the intellectualism to which the genius and eloquence of some few noted preachers and popular writers of modern times have given currency, and do not consent to be disciplined under such guidance, in the art and practice of listening to sermons as mere amateurs of elegant composition, and profound or picturesque thought. Do not, by your plaudits on such performances, draw your preachers, especially the younger ones,

more and more into this style of preaching, the method of which is "to pass Christianity through the refining fire of each successive system of sentimental philosophy that attracts ephemeral attention." Believe me, there is some danger in this age of having both preachers and hearers drawn off from what is primary and fundamental, to what is merely secondary and circumstantial. We are in many things improved, and I rejoice in the improvement; but the occasion of my joy is at the same time the occasion of my fear and my jealousy also. Our ecclesiastical architecture is just now a special object of our attention. Whitefield, it may be confessed, paid too little attention to this; we, perhaps, are paying too much. His only solicitude was to save souls, careless altogether of the tastefulness of the building within which his work, which had no relation to style of architecture, was carried on. His only calculation in the construction of a building was, how many immortal beings could be crowded within four square walls, and under a roof, to hear "the joyful sound." Hence the somewhat uncouth buildings which he erected. Ah, but when I consider that every stone in those unsightly walls has echoed to the sound of salvation and the hymns of redeemed spirits; and that almost every spot on the floor of those untasteful houses has been moistened by the tears of penitence, then, in a feeling of sanctity I seem to lose the sense of deformity, and there comes over me an awe and a solemnity which no Gothic structure, with its lofty arches and painted windows, can inspire. But still, as religion is not only the most holy, but the most beautiful thing in God's universe, there is no reason why taste and devotion should not be united. It is the ministry of the word, however, upon which the

church must be chiefly intent. The church has never been, since the apostles' days, nor was it even then, called to such a work as that which is now committed to it. God is evidently preparing his instruments and means for some mighty change in the world's condition. He is about to do a great work, but a work which he will not do without his people. He has in some measure awakened the church to a sense of her responsibilities. The Lord Jesus must have a church that will obey him, and he will have, as the latter day glory draws nigh, a church that will live for him, labour for him, and, if necessary, die for him. And if we will not make up our hearts to this tone of Christian enterprise, we had better die, and commit the interests of Christ to others, who will occupy for the Lord till he come.

If, then, such must be the church, what must be its ministers? Look, I say again and again, at Whitefield, and see what kind of ministers you should pray for, when you beseech the Lord of the harvest to send forth labourers into his field. Of course I do not mean to say that we are to expect a race of such men as he, so gifted and extraordinary: this would be all but miraculous; but I do mean a race of men imbued with his spirit. Let it not be thought incredible, much less impossible, that such a ministry should be seen upon earth. We may have them, and we must have them. The world is to be converted, and to be converted principally by preaching, and by preaching adapted to the mighty result; but the ears of men will never hear such preaching until the primitive love of Christ and of souls, the primitive self-denial, simplicity, boldness, gentleness, and zeal return to the ministry. How slow is the course of the gospel, for want of preachers so replenished with

grace by the unction of the Holy Spirit. Truly if ever there was a period when the whole Christian world should be upon their faces before the throne of mercy, imploring with all the importunity and boldness and perseverance of faith a race of ministers, each full of the Holy Ghost as were Barnabas and Paul, that period is the one now passing over us. Not from one place or another, but from all quarters of the earth, testimony multiplies daily, that, amidst the greatest possible facilities for converting the world, a ministry greatly increased in number and more devoted is indispensable. This testimony comes to us, not indeed as the Macedonian cry came to the apostle, in a supernatural vision, but in a manner not less affecting or decisive as to its import. It is a real sound, which flies round the land, and rings in our ears all day long. Send us earnest, devoted preachers, is the universal, ceaseless demand. The churches are beginning to feel, and blessed be God for it! that nothing short of intense earnestness will do. Send us preachers and pastors, not merely scholars and masters of arts, is the demand of the churches upon our colleges. It comes from hundreds of our churches; it comes from our cities, towns, and villages; it comes to us from distant islands and continents; it is brought to us by every ship that leaves our colonies, and in the letters that come from our emigrants; and what deserves especial remark, it is echoed and urged with chief earnestness by our evangelizing associations for the world's conversion.

Shall we, dear brethren, solemnly pledge ourselves this day to renewed, importunate, and believing prayer for another such sovereign visitation to the church and the world as was granted when he, whose name has been

so often repeated in this discourse, commenced his glorious career? O where is the Lord God of Elijah: where the God of Whitefield?

Illustrious man! where hast thou dropped thy mantle, or hast thou carried it with thee to glory? I seem to see thy sacred form hovering over the assembly, as if interested in these services. The eye so often suffused with the tears of pity it wept over lost souls, beams upon us with affection. If those lips, once so mighty and so tender with the accents of redeeming mercy, were permitted once more to address us, and to deliver a message from God, we can suppose what thou wouldst say to us, and in imagination we will listen to it as a voice from the eternal world. "Sinners, repent, believe, and live. Christians, be holy, useful, and devoted. Ministers of the gospel, watch, pray, labour, live, for souls as those that must give account. Occupants of this place of worship, honour my memory by cherishing the spirit that reared it." Farewell, dear saint! Return to thy rest, while we depart to fulfil those solemn injunctions, by which, though dead, though hast spoken to us.

And thou eternal God, who didst send forth thy seraph with a live coal from the altar to touch the lips of thy servant, perform the same gracious act for us, and

> "Kindle a flame of sacred love
> In these cold hearts of ours,"

and make thy ministers a flame of fire.

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